



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 24 – 31, 2015

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Business & Finance	22
Aboriginal Community Development	29
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement	37
Aboriginal Education & Youth	43
Aboriginal Health	62
Aboriginal History	72
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	78
Aboriginal Politics	82
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	99
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	112
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	118
Special Topic: Residential Schools & '60s Scoop	122
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	126

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Indigenous summer reading: 3 picks by graphic novelist David Robertson

Author of The Helen Betty Osborne story champions Thomas King and Joseph Boyden

By David Robertson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 24, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 24, 2015 7:00 AM ET



Graphic novelist David Robertson shares his top 3 picks for some summer reading. (Supplied)

In this on-going summer series authors, celebrities and CBC personalities share their favourite indigenous books, the ones they want to read this summer and the ones they think everyone should read.

David Robertson is an award-winning graphic novelist and storyteller who is an advocate for educating youth on indigenous history and contemporary issues. Here are his picks:

[A fave: *Green Grass, Running Water* by Thomas King](#)



Thomas King wrote *Green Grass, Running Water*. (HarperCollins Canada)

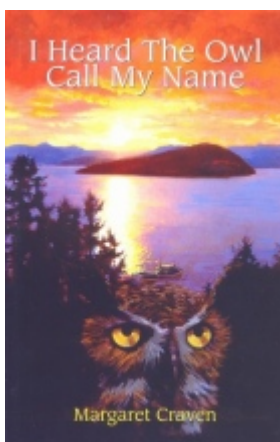
Maybe it's an obvious choice, but when something's your favourite, what are you going to do?

I remember reading this book and marveling at how it took this incredibly complex idea and made it relatable and engaging. And that's important, too, when you're discussing indigenous mythology and traditional beliefs and practices.

Green Grass, Running Water made Thomas King one of my heroes (I know, get in line Robertson), and it was just a great piece of literature.

Lately when I've been reading, my selection has been very deliberate. I have only sought out, and read, amazing literature. Stuff that I've heard is great. I do the same with movies, but that's a whole other article.

A recommendation: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven



"I Heard the Owl Call My Name" is a best-selling 1960s book. (Penguin Random House)

Last year, I read a book called *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven and it knocked my socks off.

It is a short and simple novel, but again grappled with some tough ideas that are still relevant today. The book is about a young vicar named Mark who's sent to a First Nations village in British Columbia. The man has no clue about indigenous culture, and, what's more, he's unknowingly dying from an unnamed terminal illness. Unbeknownst to Mark, he's been sent there to learn about life as he dies.

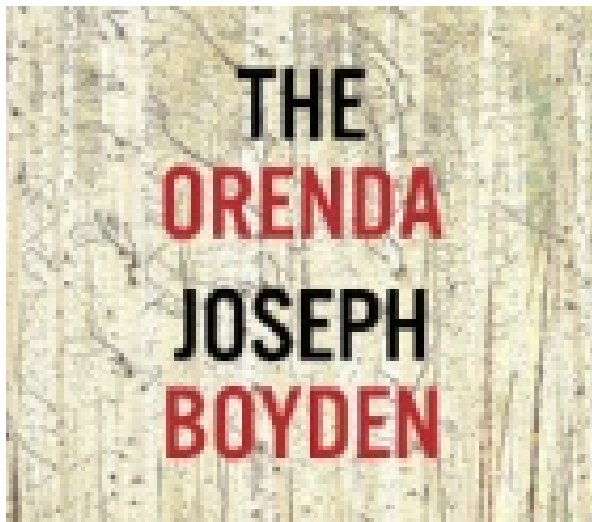
Pretty heavy, sure, but how the book unravels the beauty of a culture from a non-First Nations perspective is brilliant. The relationship between Mark and the village becomes reciprocal as he is accepted as one of the tribe, and it all comes from an openness to give and receive knowledge.

What a concept, eh? (That's me being so Canadian).

[To read this summer: *The Orenda* by Joseph Boyden](#)

Finally, as my search for great literature continues, we come to the book I want to read. Tough call.

This year I've made it a point to binge-read Miriam Toews' works, as one would watch, say, *House of Cards*. I'm almost done, too.



Joseph Boyden wrote *The Orenda*. (Penguin Group)

I've decided, then, to delve into the works of Joseph Boyden, starting with his most recent book first, *The Orenda*. I've had the pleasure of meeting Joseph and he's a straight-up genuine guy, and he was gracious enough to read and review my latest graphic novel, *Betty*.

Most importantly, though, from what I've heard about *The Orenda* it's a work I would love: a book that teaches history in a challenging way, and does so by investigating different perspectives of that history. We need to do that more, think about how we view others and how others view us, and make efforts to take that knowledge and build stronger relationships.

Literature plays a big part in that kind of social change. Try out the books I've mentioned and play your part.

Happy reading!

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indigenous-summer-reading-3-picks-by-graphic-novelist-david-robertson-1.3163941>

Musician Leonard Sumner shares stories of young indigenous life through his music

By Rosanna Deerchild, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 25, 2015 8:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 25, 2015 8:00 AM ET



Hip-hop, folk-influenced musician Leonard Sumner shares stories of culture through his music. (Nadya Kwandibens)

If you haven't heard of Leonard Sumner yet then you need to stop what you're doing and Google him immediately.

Search "Rez Poetry" and put it on your music list. You're welcome!

Leonard's music is a fusion of hip-hop, country, roots, rhythm and blues. His deeply personal lyrics and rhyme reflect his experiences as a young Indigenous person in Canada; an honest message of home, hope and heart.

This up-and coming-poet, singer songwriter and MC is Anishinaabe from Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Manitoba and makes his home in Winnipeg.

He grew up listening to old school greats like Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings; twangy guitar songs about heartbreak and love that always played on his mama's radio.

Then Leonard discovered his brother's rap and hip-hop collection and began exploring his own beats. In fact, for a short time, he adopted the name Lorenzo because he asserts, 'what kind of hip-hop name is Leonard?' But after teaching himself guitar just eight years ago, Leonard created his unique rez poetry sound; songs and stories, life lessons and philosophies.

Leonard won best new artist at the Indigenous Music Awards last year with his critical and audience acclaimed album "Rez Poetry."

He can also be found inspiring young people at gatherings and stages all over the country as well as becoming a festival favourite including at the Pan Am Games and Toronto's Planet IndigenUS in August.

Leonard Sumner joins me, Rosanna Deerchild, on *Unreserved* to talk about how he found his song and why he says music is his medicine.

Tune in to Unreserved on CBC Radio One after the 5 p.m. news in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, and after the 4 p.m. news in Yukon and the N.W.T. for more artists performing during the Pan Am Games.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/musician-leonard-sumner-shares-stories-of-young-indigenous-life-through-his-music-1.3167051>

Montreal First Peoples Festival Turns 25, Plans Epic Celebration

[ICTMN Staff](#)

7/26/15

It's outdoor-festival time in Montreal, and that means more, much more, than the Just for Laughs comedy fest or the Montreal International Jazz Festival. It is, of course, time for the Montreal First Peoples Festival, an annual celebration of the myriad cultures that existed on Turtle Island before the advent of European settlers.

This year filmmakers, musicians, dancers and all manner of indigenous artisans will converge on the Place du Festivals from July 29 through August 4 as the Montreal First Peoples Festival celebrates its 25-year anniversary.

Organizers promise an abundance of "thrilling concerts, an exacting selection of films and videos, the great multicultural parade along Saint-Catherine Street and many indoor

venue and gallery events” to celebrate “seven thousand years of human presence in this place,” according to a media release.

Nostalgia will infuse some of the events, as *Blues Blanc Rouge remix* “takes us back to First Peoples Festival’s inaugural activity; a benefit concert in Spring 1991 that succeeded in bringing in the funds needed to hold the very first edition of our festival,” said the organizers. “Florent Vollant and Richard Desjardins are back together onstage 25 years later to mark this anniversary and knock our socks off!”

Also honoring the festival’s silver anniversary is the 22-performer extravaganza called the *Transcestral* concert, concocted by Moe Clark and Katia Makdissi-Warren. Music comes from all corners of the Earth as Rise Kombucha headlines an evening with DJ Mad Eskimo and Inuit singer Sylvia Cloutier, as well as DJ Psychogrid, who will come all the way from Reunion Island.

But the festival covers many facets of indigenous life, with such events as a workshop and conference that looks at the intersection of aboriginal traditional knowledge and contemporary architecture, taking place on August 2.

For the first time ever, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), long a sponsor of the Montreal First Peoples Festival, will lead four master classes with First Nations filmmakers. APTN will also bestow its second annual recognition award to an “Aboriginal filmmaker who has particularly distinguished him or herself during the year,” the festival said.

There will also be street theatre, art exhibits and gastronomy. The full schedule and list of acts and activities can be found at the [Montreal First Peoples Festival](http://montrealfirstpeoplesfestival.com) website.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/26/montreal-first-peoples-festival-turns-25-plans-epic-celebration-161187>

First Nations hip hop artist promotes cultural healing through music

By Rachel CrowSpreadingWings Global News



Drezus performs at K-Days in Edmonton on Friday, July 24, 2015.

EDMONTON — Jeremiah Manitopyes, whose native name is Old Man Eagle, is known to most as Drezus, his hip hop moniker. The 32-year-old has been following his musical passion for over 10 years.

Now, he has been nominated for four Indigenous Music Awards.

His first introduction to hip hop was listening to Run-DMC. The lyrics blew his mind.

“I was like ‘whoa, these guys are saying crazy stuff! They don’t care what they’re saying.’ But what I started realizing was that certain people did care what they are saying.”

He started rhyming to help him express his emotions and experiences as a youth.

“Growing up I was a loner kid. I was really open to a lot of things and hip hop was one of them.”

Drezus came from a rough background. He grew up in Saskatchewan, struggled with addiction, even spent some time in jail.

He joined Team Rezoffical in 2004 and they released the song “Lonely” in 2008. It climbed the Much Music hip hop charts.

However, Drezus’ struggles with the law didn’t come to an end. But, the last time he was behind bars he learned about bringing in positive energy. He was shown his own First Nations culture, taught how to make drums and to sing his traditional Ojibwa songs.

“When I learned more of a respect for myself, I learned more of a respect for everything else.”

After being released into the recovery program, Drezus says connecting with roots is what allowed him to see who he really was as an aboriginal person.

“Hop hip was an extension of who I was and wanted to be,” he explained. “But once I connected with the cultural aspect, that’s when [I was] like ‘OK this is me.’”

Now, Drezus has begun working with youth through several organizations, including the YMCA in Calgary.

“They’re used to seeing the rap guys in the videos – the gangsters – they look up to that for some reason, but I kind of slide into that, that whole world. I fill that image for them, but then when I start talking about positive things, they really listen.

The rapper wants to encourage kids to be fearless on their journey to self-discovery.

“I want to teach kids how to express themselves and to not feel shy about it.”

Drezus is up for four [Indigenous Music Awards](#) this year: Indigenous Entertainer of the Year, Producer of the Year, Best Hip Hop Album, and Best Music Video. The award show will be held in Winnipeg in September.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2135986/first-nations-hip-hop-artist-promotes-cultural-healing-through-music/>

A Tribe Called Red's electric powwow puts indigenous culture centre stage

Tribe has attracted huge audiences by sampling pieces of First Nation history that were once outlawed and suppressed in the US and Canada, creating an uncomfortable tension between its indigenous and non-indigenous fans



A Tribe Called Red. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

Damaris Colhoun

Tuesday 28 July 2015 17.17 BST Last modified on Tuesday 28 July 2015 17.34 BST

The dispute began on Instagram last summer, when Bear Witness, a founding member of the electronic group [A Tribe Called Red](#), posted a photo at the Calgary folk music festival. Taken from the stage, it shows a sea of fans dancing furiously to Tribe's blend of powwow songs, electronic music and dubstep.

"Yes #calgaryfolkfest2014. U guys were amazing," Bear Witness wrote in the caption.

But @nikkilaes, a fan, interpreted the photo differently. What struck her most was the racial makeup of the crowd.

"Gotta say it ... Can't help myself ... there's a whole lot of blonde in those first few front rows" she wrote. Others agreed.

For Witness, a DJ who grew up between Buffalo, Toronto and Six Nations of the Grand River, home to the largest First Nations band in [Canada](#), such disputes are not uncommon. They've been cropping up since 2008, when he and Ian Campeau, also known as DeeJay NDN, threw their first electric powwow in Ottawa.



Tim '2oolman' Hill, Bear Witness and Ian Campeau of A Tribe Called Red. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

At the time, Campeau was getting invited to Korean parties, Jamaican parties and other "culturally specific" DJ nights. He found there was nothing equivalent for indigenous kids beyond the "local Indian bar, or the blues night where Indians go".

So he and Witness, both working DJs, started a party of their own, for local indigenous students. They convinced their friends to give them some space, set up their turntables and mashed up their own blend of electronic music and powwow, whose rawhide drumbeats and full-throated singing is a cultural touchstone for hundreds of Native tribes.

The party went nuts. "Indigenous people are used to being invisible, keeping our heads down," Witness said. "So when people started freaking out across the dance floor, we knew we were on to something."

Tribe's Electric powwow, now known as powwow step, has since gone global. Nation II Nation, their second album released in 2013, was shortlisted for a Polaris music prize and included in the Washington Post's [top 10 albums](#) of the year.

But their big moment came in 2014. After months on tour in Europe, where they performed from Paris to Berlin, they took home a Juno, Canada's music award, for breakthrough artist of the year, and were nominated for best electronic album. It was the first time an aboriginal artist had won outside the aboriginal category.

For fans, Tribe's success is a source of pride in a national context where First Nation people [still face systemic racism](#), unchecked police brutality and higher rates of suicide and addiction than any other group in North America.

We never expected non-indigenous people to show up at our parties and listen to our music

Bear Witness

For critics, they represent an emerging aesthetic that explores the tensions between city life and "rez life", between pop and traditional native culture – a dual identity shaped by a decades-long migration from reservations and Canadian reserves to urban centers in a pattern that mirrors that of the Great Migration. Ethnomusicologists see Tribe's approach to sampling native music as a form of repatriation, a challenge to western concepts of copyright.



A Tribe Called Red's mashup of electronic and powwow music challenges western concepts of copyright.
Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

The band has also struck a chord with a certain cultural elite – and this is where things get complicated.

Ever since the end of the Indian wars, when tribes were herded onto reservations and their religions and languages became the target of federal policies, the diversity of tribal culture has been reduced to a fetish, with most pop culture references fixing it firmly in the past. The "hipster headdress" sometimes seen at festivals like Coachella or at parties in Brooklyn is just an example.

When white fans started showing up to Tribe's shows wearing feathers and war paint, they publicly condemned it and issued a ban: headdresses would have to be checked at the door. They have also taken on racist mascots, given voice to aboriginal women

musicians by sampling their music in novel ways, and wrote a song for [Idle No More](#), one of the largest indigenous protest movements in Canada's history.

They've been accused on social media of reverse racism, of being too politically correct, of "taking away people's fun" – which is why Witness finds the exchange on Instagram both upsetting and delighting.

"We never expected non-indigenous people to show up at our parties and listen to our music," Witness says. "I see the indigenous audience getting frustrated by the space that the non-indigenous crowd can take up. The fact they're out there trying to claim that space is a kind of action. In the past, indigenous people were silent. We didn't complain. We tried to fit in. There wasn't a space to complain about. So that in itself is a new kind of privilege for indigenous youth to have: to be able to complain."

Underpinning such complaints are questions around assimilation and ownership, and who Tribe's music belongs to.

By sampling powwow music and dance, Tribe is sampling a piece of indigenous history that was outlawed and suppressed, through indirect policies and outright violence, in both the US and Canada.

These conflicts speak to a longer history of struggle, resistance, and music that extends back through the Oka Crisis, the American Indian Movement and the [massacre at Wounded Knee](#).

●●●

On a snowy weekend in January, Witness, Campeau, and Tim Hill, the band's newest member, sat inside a multi-million dollar recording studio at the Phi Center in Montreal, surrounded by Mics and mixers, foam-padded walls, and a flag of the Iroquois Confederacy.

After five consecutive weekends in the studio, the sound and feel of the album was beginning to take shape. A mashup of rawhide drums and electronically crafted beats, it combined vocals by the [Black Bear Singers](#) (a young powwow group from an isolated reserve in northern Quebec) with rappers, electronic musicians and folk artists. The list is impressive: among those names were Saul Williams, Maxida Marak, Koolaid and the former chairman of the American Indian Movement, John Trudell, the activist behind the occupation of Alcatraz, [one of the most successful American Indian protests](#) of the 20th century.



Ian Campeau of A Tribe Called Red. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

Now, as they waited on the arrival of [Leonard Sumner](#), a rapper-turned-country singer from Winnipeg, [and Shad](#), a Kenyan rapper whose lyrics touch on colonialism, they were grappling with the reality that powwow and rap aren't easy companions.

Like Campeau, who used to drink on stage, Witness is open about his fondness for marijuana. But the band's increasingly public role has come with the burden of responsibility. Indigenous communities have the highest rates of alcohol and drug abuse across North America. Addiction is more than a physical scourge: it's a tense emotional-cultural package, a legacy of colonialism, a symbol of defeat.

Today, in defiance of that history, most powwows are alcohol-free. In solidarity and respect, Tribe has been sober for more than a year.

But when one's music represents a collision of multiple worlds, "respect" can be a minefield.



Bear Witness of A Tribe Called Red. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

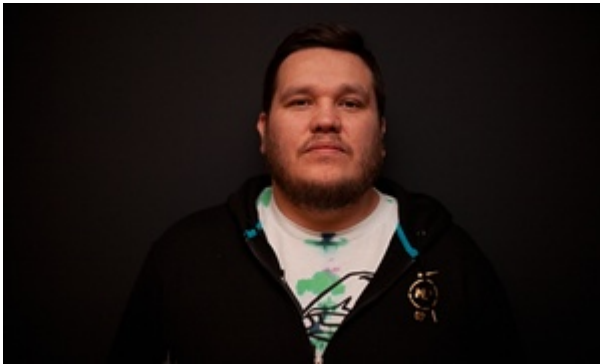
Tribe's approach has been to manage their image fiercely. That they censor drug references in their songs while smoking marijuana in private can seem high-handed and hypocritical, yet it also reflects the tensions in their music – a clash of club and powwow culture, of personal choice and cultural obligations, of traditionalism and pop. Ever conscious of history and their devoted indigenous fans, Tribe understands that culture is a weapon. It's something you handle with care.

Yet Tribe is pushing back against the world they come from too. They've refused to enter the aboriginal category at the Juno awards and tapped into dubstep, rap and the sounds of other brown power movements so as to expand their message and reach. They understand that for culture to stay alive it has to go viral. Digital culture has given them a platform to do this, allowing them to reach thousands.

Indigenous people are used to be invisible, keeping our heads down

Bear Witness

"My reserve, Nipissing, was out of walking distance to the nearest town," Campeau said. "That was on purpose. It kept us out of sight and out of mind. Twitter changed everything by helping to close that gap. It's giving us a platform to confront a lot of racism that we weren't able to confront before. Now [racists] are posting in comment sections where I can call them out. Or they're trolling a hashtag and I'm able to kick it like a bees nest and disrupt it."



Tim '2oolman' Hill of A Tribe Called Red. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

...

Earlier this month, Witness and Campeau performed at the [opening of the Whitney Museum of Art](#) in New York City, wearing bandanas around their faces and baseball caps pulled low over their eyes. An example of growing institutional interest in their work, their performance tied in nicely with the museum's inaugural exhibit, a re-examination of arts in the US called America is Hard To See.

It also involved another fraught negotiation. Originally scheduled to perform at the ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Wooster Group, Tribe nearly backed out when they learned that the company, known for their experimental works, had been staging an adaptation of Shakespeare featuring actors in redface.

Cynthia Hedstrom, one of Wooster's producers, was disappointed in Tribe's decision but stood behind the show. "Often these taboo subjects, precisely because of their fraught history, are some of the most artistically powerful ones. We therefore take the position that nothing should be 'off limits' for an artist trying to shed light on the human condition."

Whitney museum: America Is Hard to See exhibition tells the stories of a nation

Filled with anger and beauty, pleasure and confrontation, the new Whitney's inaugural show reveals a museum unafraid to let the light – and the city – into the building and its art

Witness disagreed. “It’s the kind of thing that was radical before there were any brown radicals around to object to it.” Tribe declined to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, agreeing to perform at the block party instead.

During their set, held under the open sky along the Hudson River, Tribe mixed powwow with songs by Johnny Cash and Buffy St Marie behind a giant screen that played a clip from Back to the Future, featuring Michael J Fox in the Delorean time machine being chased by a band of pony-riding warriors.

At one point, a Native dancer emerged from the crowd and spontaneously joined them on the stage, wearing regalia made of flowing, multi-color yarns; he apparently belonged to a Two Spirit dance society representing gay and gender-variant individuals. Tribe's manager, DJ BuddaBlaze, was delighted.

“Look at all these people here,” Buddah said. “It’s all colors, all creeds, it’s something in the music, the magic BPM.” He was hopping up and down. Then he glanced up at the museum, in all its cool formality. “See? We can be modern too.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jul/28/electric-powwow-tribe-called-red>

First Peoples Festival opens with documentary Circus Without Borders

[T'Cha Dunlevy, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 28, 2015 | Last Updated: July 28, 2015 3:36 PM EDT



Yamoussa Bangoura, left, and Guillaume Saladin — the leaders of the Kalabante and Artcirq troupes, respectively — are world-class performers who never forgot their roots. The artists play central roles in the documentary *Circus Without Borders*, which opens the Montreal First Peoples Festival. Michele McDonald / *Circus Without Borders*

Running away and joining the circus has a romantic ring to it, but Susan Gray and Linda Matchan never lose sight of what their subjects are running from in their multilayered documentary *Circus Without Borders*, which opens the 25th edition of the Montreal First Peoples Festival Wednesday evening.

The film follows the Inuit circus troupe [Artcirq](#), based in Igloolik, Nunavut, and the Guinean acrobatic ensemble [Kalabante](#), hired by the equestrian-arts company Cavalia. The two groups are connected by their leaders, Guillaume Saladin and Yamoussa Bangoura, world-class performers who never forgot their roots.

Saladin's father, Bernard, was an anthropologist who spent years in Igloolik studying aboriginal life. After achieving success in the circus world, the son returned to the north in 1998, launching Artcirq as a way of bringing hope to the community.

Within less than a year, Artcirq was travelling the world, garnering accolades and attention wherever it went. The company provided the point of entry for Gray and Matchan, who were initially considering doing something on the more sombre topic of suicide in aboriginal communities.

"I'm a reporter for the Boston Globe," said Matchan, who was born in Winnipeg. "In 2006, the travel section sent me to Cape Dorset (in Nunavut), to do a story on Inuit artists. I took a side trip (to a nearby town) and somebody took their own life while I was there. It brought the community together in a shocking way."

Matchan then came across a story on Artcirq in the Globe and Mail, and suggested it to Gray as an entry point for their documentary.

"I'm always looking for ways to tell serious stories so that people will watch them," Gray said. "If you want to make a film about suicide among indigenous people, forget it; but you can use the Inuit circus as a way to capture people's attention."

The only problem: Their subjects didn't go for it initially. Neither Saladin nor his performers were interested in talking about aboriginal suicide. The topic hit too close to home.

"The whole reason we had access to the community is because (Guillaume's father) Bernard Saladin had gone up and made friends over a lifetime," Gray said. "Guillaume was very careful who he let in. He didn't trust us, and he didn't want a film about suicide."

So they focused on the circus, which before long found Gray and Matchan in Guinea, where Artcirq met up with Kalabante. The filmmakers soon realized the scope of their documentary had expanded.

"We were not only enchanted, we were mesmerized," Matchan said. "We came to see the two stories as the inverse of one another — these opposite scenarios of hot and cold countries, black and (light-skinned) performers. And the movie started to lead us in different directions, following these two circuses."

Impressed with Bangoura's physical and vocal talents, Cavalia artistic director Normand Latourelle sent a scouting team to Guinea, where Bangoura had started a circus school. Intending to take three acrobats for Cavalia's *Odysseo* show, director Wayne Fowkes came home with 10.

Meanwhile, things got serious in Igloolik with the suicide of long-standing Artcirq member Solomon Uyarasuk, in an RCMP detachment cell in 2012. The topic could no longer be avoided, and Gray and Matchan found their subjects opening up about the tragedy.

"Ultimately, the message (of the film) is not 'Circus stops suicide,' " Gray said. "It didn't. But the (Artcirq) members were there to support each other, and the circus was something to cling to when it was dark."

"We read the police report of how he killed himself. It was terribly tragic. It just shows how dark their lives are, which we didn't see. That was the point where I got it, how important it is to stay positive and to provide something for young people."

The odds stacked against the Kalabante team are also explored, as members adapt to Canadian life and send significant portions of their salaries home to their struggling families.

"I feel like (these two communities) have inherited a terrible world, post-colonialism," Gray said. "We've made this film on the young generation that looks up to these two leaders and says, 'Wow, I want to be like that.' "

Which makes *Circus Without Borders* more than just a comforting documentary about the circus, Matchan said.

“People are starting to recognize that we’ve made a human-rights film.”

AT A GLANCE

Circus Without Borders opens the 25th Montreal First Peoples Festival Wednesday, July 29 at 8:30 p.m. at the Grande Bibliothèque, 475 de Maisonneuve Blvd. E. Susan Gray, Linda Matchan, Guillaume Saladin, Yamoussa Bangoura and members of Artcirq and Cavalia will introduce the film. Admission is free. For more information, visit presenceautochtone.ca.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/movies/first-peoples-festival-opens-with-documentary-circus-without-borders>

North Winnipeg powwow connects youth with indigenous traditions

Gilbert Park Going Places group gives kids a safe space to socialize off the streets

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 28, 2015 5:36 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 29, 2015 7:52 AM CT



Families and friends in a north Winnipeg community had a chance to bond over indigenous culture on Tuesday.

The Gilbert Park neighbourhood just held its second annual powwow. It gave indigenous kids living in the area an opportunity to dress up in traditional powwow garb and showcase their newly acquired dance moves.



Seven-year-old Tenia Moose got dressed up for the Gilbert Plains powwow on Tuesday. (Meagan Fiddler/CBC)

Carmelita Blais teamed up with her mom Colleen Blais to create a decorative outfit for the little girl to wear.

"I've done the designs on the shawl," said Carmelita Blais, whose bright outfit consisted of a mix of pinks and purples — her two favourite colours.

Carmelita Blais is a member of the Gilbert Park Going Places group, an after school program that gives youth a safe space to socialize off the streets. Eighteen youth in the program spent the last six months working hard on their outfits for the powwow.

Colleen Blais said making the shawl and dress gave her and her daughter a chance to come together in a special way.

"I'm really proud of her I guess," said Colleen Blais. "She's been working hard on her outfit and I wanted to go give her a hand."

Stephanie Ens, a youth and family social worker with Gilbert Park Going Places, said the outfit-making aspect of the program provided families with an opportunity to pass traditions on to younger generations.

"We're just hoping that through making their own costumes, choosing their own material, that they will reconnect with their culture," said Ens, adding most of the kids in the program are from First Nation reserves.

The act of making outfits and practising dances not only helped Carmelita Blais get to know her roots; it also allowed her mother to reconnect to her past.

"Looking forward to going to other powwows and maybe making my own outfit," said Colleen Blais.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/north-winnipeg-powwow-connects-youth-with-indigenous-traditions-1.3171617>

New Britannia Carving Pavilion honours legacy of First Nations contributions

Vancouver, BC, Canada / News Talk 980 CKNW | Vancouver's News. Vancouver's Talk.

[Anna Kalfa](#)

July 30, 2015 11:56 am



Squamish carver Darren Yelton talks about Britannia Community Centre's new Carving Pavilion.

Right behind Britannia Community Centre is a new Carving Pavilion that officially opened this summer. The pavilion will be the centre for traditional aboriginal carvers and their students, creating canoes, totem poles and more.

Sean Leslie spoke with Squamish carver Darren Yelton about what this means for students and the community.

Yelton started carving at the age of 9 years old, and sold his first carving for \$20 – which he promptly spent on candy for himself and his friends.

He says carving is important to the culture because it's a way of leaving markers spread throughout the different territories of the Squamish, Tseil-Waututh, and Musqueam nations to the public. They're put up to show all people that they're welcome to the territory with open arms.



Cynthia Low, Executive Director of Britannia Community Services Centre, at the door of the new carving Pavilion.

Celebrating community

Cynthia Low is the Executive Director of Britannia Community Services Centre. She says it's about celebrating their traditional and non-traditional sides of the neighbourhood.

“This is a carving pavilion that was built to honour the legacy of First Nations contributions historically, currently and in the future.”

Squamish carver Ray Natraoro was working on his 30th canoe. He says when he first started carving sea-going canoes there was no one around who was carving them, so he had to teach himself how to carve a canoe by studying them at museums. Each canoe is one log, which is steamed open after it's carved.



CKNW's Sean Leslie speaks with Squamish carver Ray Natraoro about his 30th canoe (Britannia Carving Pavilion, June 2015)

Reviving a lost art

“When I started reading about steaming there was no one around that actually did it. My grandfather heard stories of elders talking about it, so when I started to steam using this old technology I had to learn by myself.”

Direct Link: <http://www.cknw.com/2015/07/30/new-britannia-carving-pavilion-bring-aboriginal-carvers/>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Third in a series: Aboriginal tourism in Northern Ontario

[Loren Christie](#), Canada AM's Travel Expert

Published Friday, July 24, 2015 8:21AM EDT

Last Updated Friday, July 24, 2015 8:22AM EDT

Part three of our three part series on Aboriginal Tourism in Canada, showcases Loren Christie experiencing the Great Spirit Circle Trail.

Eight First Nation communities, all part of the larger Anishnaabe nation, inhabit Manitoulin Island and the Sagamok region, which extends onto the mainland to the north. Together they make up the [Great Spirit Circle Trail](#), which is not really a trail but rather a collection of attractions and activities offered to visitors eager to learn about the culture of our First Nations people.

My Great Spirit experience started with a traditional smudging ceremony (which we did not film out of respect for the ceremony) to bless our day by local Ojibwe guide, Steven Antoine. According to Steven, it's important to have a local guide involved so you are truly getting an authentic experience by people who live what they teach.



On a canoe trip on Lake Mindemoya he shared with me the lore of the land, which included the creation of the "grandmother" island in the middle of the lake. After our time on the water, we went on a medicine walk where I learned the healing properties of various plants as well as some practical tips; cedar tea is delicious and white birch bark will remove sticky sap from your skin. My favourite experience was Steven teaching me how to make my own drum out of deer hide. The drum, I learned, is the one common element among all First Nations people across Canada representing the heartbeat of Mother Earth.



Located in Northern Ontario, Manitoulin is a two-hour drive from Sudbury or a seven-hour journey from Toronto including a ride aboard the M.S. Chi-Cheemaun ferry. There are also two airports on the island should you want to fly in.

The Great Spirit Circle Trail is one of approximately 1,500 aboriginal businesses that came together last year to form the [Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada](http://canadaam.ctvnews.ca/travel/third-in-a-series-aboriginal-tourism-in-northern-ontario-1.2485444). I encourage everyone to make an element of aboriginal tourism part of their next vacation. For real change to occur we need break down the negative stereotypes that exist by growing our collective understanding of this fascinating culture.

Direct Link: <http://canadaam.ctvnews.ca/travel/third-in-a-series-aboriginal-tourism-in-northern-ontario-1.2485444>

Federal government, First Nations face court battle over Transparency Act

8 bands refuse to publicly post financial documents, council salaries

By Terry Reith, Briar Stewart, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 27, 2015 3:00 AM MT Last Updated: Jul 27, 2015 3:00 AM MT



The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, located in Fort Chipewyan close to Alberta's border with the Northwest Territories, is in a battle with the federal government over transparency. (Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation)

The federal government is taking eight First Nations to court in a bid to force compliance with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which became law one year ago.

The FNFTA requires First Nations to submit audited financial statements, along with the salaries of the chief and councillors. That information is posted publicly on the internet. So far, 570 of 582 First Nations have complied, and four others are working co-operatively with the federal government to meet the requirements.

The government has filed applications in Federal Court to force the remaining eight bands to submit financial information for the 2013-14 fiscal year. It has already suspended all funding not related to essential services, such as health and education.



Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation spokeswoman Eriel Deranger says salaries are funded by the band's business earnings, not the federal government. (CBC)

Two of the bands, Alberta's Sawridge and Saskatchewan's Onion Lake First Nation, are in turn taking the government to court, calling for a stay, or halt to the proceedings.

Their application questions the legality of the FNFTA on the basis that it violates treaty and aboriginal rights as well as sections of the Constitution that ban discrimination and entrench the rights of aboriginal people.

Any action the government can take against the bands is on hold until the application is heard in Saskatoon Federal Court on Aug. 19.

No one from the Sawridge Band was available to discuss the legal action, and the Onion Lake Band declined any comment while the case is before the courts.

In documents filed with the court, Sawridge states that disclosing its finances will place it at a competitive disadvantage, as much of its income is derived from its business holdings.

A similar argument comes from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, which owns 18 businesses servicing the nearby oilsands. The main holding company, Acden, is headquartered in Fort McMurray, Alta., and worth an estimated \$250 million. The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation's chief and council serve as the company's board of directors, said band spokeswoman Eriel Deranger.

She said the band's administration and salaries are paid out of company profits, not from federal funding, which puts the First Nation in a unique position.

"Why are we required to disclose our non-public dollars to the public?" she asks.

"We are not receiving public funding and this could actually be quite harmful to our nation considering most of our funding comes through our businesses."

The band does use federal money for health and education. But Deranger points out that money is paid not to the band but to the Nune Health Authority and education funding is paid to the Athabasca Tribal Council.

Sean Jones, a Vancouver lawyer who specializes in aboriginal law, believes bands like the Athabasca Chipewyan and Sawridge have a valid point.

"Because First Nations have commercial enterprises that compete in the commercial mainstream, their competitors and people they're negotiating with would have access to this information."

Jones expects a complex and lengthy legal battle as the case involves unresolved legal questions, such as whether First Nations were adequately consulted about the requirements, or whether they needed to be consulted at all.

"These are all complicated legal issues that do need to be addressed," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/federal-government-first-nations-face-court-battle-over-transparency-act-1.3167268>

First Nations bands have until Wednesday to submit 2014-15 financial data

98% of bands complied with the Financial Transparency Act last year

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 28, 2015 2:38 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 28, 2015 6:26 PM ET



The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation led by Chief Allan Adam is in a battle with the federal government over a new law that went into effect last year. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

First Nations bands that have not filed their financial statements for 2014-15 by Wednesday at midnight will risk having federal funding for non-essential services cut beginning Sept. 1, warns Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

Under a new law which came into effect [one year ago](#), First Nations have to submit to the Canadian government their audited financial statements for the past fiscal year, including the salaries and expenses of their chiefs and councillors.

While 98 per cent of bands complied with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act last year, CBC News reported Monday that [the federal government has taken eight bands to court](#) in a bid to force them to comply. Four other bands are said to be co-operating with the government to meet the requirements.

"Let me be clear, our government will take action, according to the provisions of the law, against First Nation governments that do not follow the law," Valcourt said in a written

statement on Tuesday. "Those First Nation band councils which fail to comply by the deadline will receive several formal reminders."

"Beginning Sept. 1, 2015, bands that have yet to comply with the law will see funding for non-essential services withheld. Further actions may include seeking court orders to compel compliance."

Withholding federal funds for non-essential services could impact First Nations bands that rely on government support programs to help them meet the costs of delivering services. The salaries of chiefs and councillors, according to the government, which in part can derive from federal funding, are also considered a non-essential service.

The federal government will not give First Nations bands [an additional 120 days](#) to post their financial data like it did last year when the new law came into effect.

"Unlike last year, no additional extension will be provided before sanctions are applied. I have directed that the sanctions not target essential services that support First Nation members," Valcourt said.

Threat 'fans the flames of division'

The minister also took a swipe at both opposition leaders, accusing them of taking a position against accountability and transparency.

"It is shameful that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said he would scrap this law and deny these members the right to access basic information about their community finances, a right that is awarded to every other Canadian," Valcourt said.

"Similar to the Liberal leader, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair has shown his party does not believe they need to be accountable to taxpayers by [refusing to pay back the \\$2.7 million of taxpayer dollars](#) they owe for use of their satellite offices outside Ottawa."

In a phone interview with CBC News, NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic Niki Ashton said the threat to withhold funding was not only "unacceptable" but also "fans the flames of division with indigenous peoples."

Ashton said if the New Democrats form government in the next election they would "either try to repeal or amend the Act" but they would consult with First Nations beforehand.

Liberal Aboriginal Affairs critic Carolyn Bennett said the minister's threat to pull funding was "inappropriate" given "this government's inability to foster a working relationship with First Nations."

"A Liberal government would review all the laws that have been unilaterally imposed on Aboriginal Peoples by this government," Bennett told CBC News in a phone interview.

Last year's disclosures revealed in part that Ron Giesbrecht, chief of the Kwikwetlem First Nation in B.C., earned nearly [\\$1 million last year](#). That amount included a one-time \$800,000 bonus which came as a result of a land deal with the B.C. government.

The number of bands that have submitted their financial data for 2014-15 will not be known for a day or two after Wednesday's deadline.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-bands-have-until-wednesday-to-submit-2014-15-financial-data-1.3171200>

Court battle brews over First Nations finances

Bands refuse to open up record books

By Andrea Hill, The Starphoenix July 29, 2015



"Beginning September 1st, 2015, bands that have yet to comply with the law will see funding for non-essential services withheld. "Further actions may include seeking court orders to compel compliance," Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said in a press release Tuesday.

A court battle between the federal government and some Saskatchewan First Nations is coming to Saskatoon next month.

The federal government announced in December that it is taking six First Nations - including the Ochapowace Cree Nation, Onion Lake Cree Nation and Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan - to court to force them to post their financial information online. In a notice of application to federal court, the government said the six groups failed or refused to comply with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which came into effect in 2013, despite ample time and "repeated demands" by the minister of aboriginal affairs.

Onion Lake Cree Nation and the Sawridge First Nation near Slave Lake in Alberta have requested that court proceedings be delayed.

Their arguments are set to be heard in by a federal court judge sitting in Saskatoon Court of Queen's Bench on Aug. 19 and 20, according to court documents.

Under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, First Nations have to publish consolidated financial statements that outline their chief and councillors' salaries on the Government of Canada website by July of each year.

The deadline for submitting documents for 2014-15 is by the end of today. Bands that fail to do so will have their federal funding cut.

"Beginning September 1st, 2015, bands that have yet to comply with the law will see funding for non-essential services withheld. "Further actions may include seeking court orders to compel compliance," Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said in a press release Tuesday.

"Let me be clear, our government will take action, according to the provisions of the law, against First Nation governments that do not follow the law."

Last year - the first time First Nations were required to post financial information - the government granted a four-month extension before pulling funding. By then, 98 per cent of the country's 581 First Nations had published the mandated documents.

Valcourt said no extension will be issued this year.

By the end of the business day Tuesday, the 2014-15 financial reports for most Saskatchewan First Nations were not available online, though a spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada said its website is still being updated as documents are received. Chiefs of the Ochapowace, Onion Lake and Thunderchild bands, who have not posted all of the required financial documents for 2013-14 or 2014-15, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Court+battle+brews+over+First+Nations+finances/1250647/story.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

Made-for-Inuit summer camp brings the North to the city

"They are together, sharing the same issues, the same struggles"

LISA GREGOIRE, July 24, 2015 - 8:30 am



Groove it girls! From left Liitia, Crystal and Cassie bust a few moves July 23 at this week's Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre day camp at Queen Elizabeth Public School in Ottawa. (PHOTOS BY LISA GREGOIRE)



Yavuz Sundu, 16, right, used to attend the OICC summer day camps. Now he's a youth worker helping to run them.

OTTAWA — “Are we playing Jenga?” asks a little boy who is crowded around a table at Ottawa’s Queen Elizabeth Public School with more than a dozen other bright-eyed Inuit kids.

“No, we’re not playing Jenga,” says a tattooed, goateed Dion Metcalfe, a large polar bear head made of bone dangling from a leather string around his ample neck.

“Many people think this is how an inuksuk has to look,” Metcalfe says, July 23. He piles the Jenga blocks to make a traditional, symmetrical inuksuk. “That’s not true. An inuksuk is a pile of rocks that tells a story.”

What if one arm is longer, he asks the kids.

“It means to go that way,” one answers, pointing to the longer side.

What if both are the same, he asks.

Silence.

“It means this is the spot,” he says.

Metcalf is a Bridging the Gap youth worker with the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre — he's at the school today helping to deliver cultural programs at a free summer camp for Inuit children.

He explains that inuksuit sometimes tell a passerby where food has been cached.

"We Inuit, we always share our food. When people come to my house, I open the cupboards. People take whatever they want," Metcalf says.

What happens when you hunt five caribou but you only need two, he asks the children. A boy's hand shoots up. "We give it away!"

"Yes," Metcalf says. Extra food can be buried in the permafrost and preserved for someone who is on the land and unable to find food, he says. An inuksuk can mark the spot and people can help themselves if they need it.

Every summer, the OICC offers free day camps — one week in July and one in August — for the children of Inuit families who live in Ottawa.

Children who attend get free transportation to and from the camp and also enjoy lunch and snacks throughout the day. Each day contains at least one cultural component although Inuktitut and Inuit culture are woven throughout the program.

For the program, the camp receives \$1,000 from PPA Kids, a Pan Am and Parapan Am organization, and the rest of the funding is cobbled together from various OICC programs.

In the morning, Sonia Awad, a dance instructor, works with a group of children in the gym, teaching them a hip hop dance routine.

Despite the gym's stuffy heat, the dancers giggle and are enthusiastic, spinning on their bottoms and shaking their hips during the "freestyle" portion of the routine.

An elder usually visits every day. On July 22, Meeka Kakudluk, a former Iqaluit teacher, brought her accordion and taught the kids square dancing.

"They loved it. It was super cute," says the OICC's Jessica Peacock, the OICC's sport and recreation coordinator who is helping to run the camp. During free time, Kakudluk taught some of the kids how to play the accordion.

"It gives them a piece of their culture," Metcalf says of the camp experience.

"Also they get to hang out with other Inuit kids. They go to school in the year and they're a minority. They come to this program and they are together, sharing the same issues, the same struggles. They create life-long bonds."

His daughter Samantha, now 11, has attended OICC programs since she was a toddler and has formed a throatsinging duo with another girl she met through the centre. They now get hired to perform at events.

Yavuz Sundu, 16, a summer student, remembers coming to OICC programs as a youngster. And now he's getting paid to help out.

"I love it. You come here and watch the kids having so much fun. I used to come to camps like this when I was young and loved it," said Sundu, born in Montreal to an Inuk mother from Iqaluit.

He's fluent in French which makes him a valuable asset at the OICC offices where he sometimes does translation for staff members.

Sundu says he plans to become a tradesman one day, maybe an electrician or plumber. But he's still got two years of high school to finish first.

He said he visited Iqaluit once, to attend his grandfather's funeral.

"I'd like to live there because there's lots of family. But I like the city more," he says.

Near noon, kids are finishing up their construction paper inuksuit projects.

A little girl named Papatsie shows me hers. She has written on it "my Inuksuk tells people where the first star of the month was so they would fish there."

A boy named Michael shows me his project with a shy smile. "This is where we find the tuktu."



Kids attending this week's OICC day camp in Ottawa make construction paper inuksuit after a presentation on what inuksuit are used for by Dion Metcalfe.

Direct Link: <http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674made-for-inuit-summer-camp-in-the-city/>

Carving studio a gathering place for Ottawa Inuit youth

"For these guys, it gives them a skill"

LISA GREGOIRE, July 27, 2015 - 7:30 am



Facilitator Dion Metcalfe shows Neil Evaglok how to file down stone manually. (PHOTOS BY LISA GREGOIRE)



Dion Metcalfe, seated at dust station, uses a rotary tool to cut walrus tusk into slices so carvers can make rings.



Foster dad Joe Juralak looks up from his own project to see the hunk of serpentine Neil Evaglok has ambitiously chosen to work on.

OTTAWA — Joe Juralak unties inline skates and enters the small, crowded carving studio at the back of a building in Vanier in sock feet.

It's hot out this July afternoon and he's sweaty from the journey. He cracks open a water bottle and downs it.

Two boys he's fostering, Neil Evaglok and Charlie Manning, lock their bikes outside and enter the east Ottawa building, all smiles and wide eyes.

It's busier than usual July 23 at this weekly carving drop-in and all the power tool stations are currently occupied.

No matter. Manning pulls up a seat and reaches into a plastic bin full of marble slab remnants. He's going to make an inuksuk.

Evaglok fishes around in another bin full of raw serpentine stone. Unsatisfied, he opens a second bin with larger pieces the size of his head. Much better.

He grabs a big hunk of stone and struggles to put it on the table.

"What are you going to do with that?" asks facilitator Dion Metcalfe.

"Polar bear," Evaglok says.

"Huh. Big one," Metcalfe says, smiling.

Evaglok takes a file and starts hand grinding it. Metcalfe shows him the proper technique: one way, don't saw back and forth. Evaglok does this for about five minutes before giving up. "So big!" he says in his defence.

Located at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre's youth facility on Queen Mary St., the carving shop occupies an air-conditioned back room which is decked out with all the tools and materials you might need to learn how to carve stone, antler, bone and tusk.

TD Bank gave the OICC money to purchase four electric dust collectors which allow carvers to use power tools indoors to grind stone and other materials without filling the room, and their lungs, with potentially harmful dust.

Electric Dremel rotary tools are attached to each dust collector console and carvers can use any number of bits to grind down their pieces including diamond bits for the hardest stone.

Metcalfe manages to find a lot of carving materials for free on his own time. He gets the serpentine stone from an abandoned quarry in Quebec and a local marble shop that makes gravestones and countertops donates leftover marble pieces.

For the other materials, such as antlers and walrus tusks, Metcalfe goes on Facebook group sites and posts his requests. He purchases mostly from hunters in Nunavut, he says.

Over the summer, the carving shop is open on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and anyone can drop by to refine their skills or explore a new hobby.

A youth worker from an Ottawa area group home has brought three boys of various ages. Two are Inuit and one is First Nations. They sit on stools at the power stations, face masks on, hunched over, focused.

One boy is making a small seal out of stone. The others are grinding walrus tusk disks into rings. They wear the uniform of youth: T-shirts, jeans, trendy ball hats.

“For these guys, it gives them a skill,” Metcalfe says. “If they come every week, they’ll learn.”

Metcalfe is only filling in as facilitator this summer. The centre plans to hire a full time arts coordinator, he says, to begin more extensive programming in the fall.

Ideally, the studio’s users will one day produce enough items for sale, Metcalfe says, with part of the proceeds going back to the centre to pay for those materials.

For now, it appears to be a place for Inuit youth to spend time together and try new things.

“Let the tool work for you. You don’t have to press hard,” Metcalfe says, when he hears the telltale whine of a tool in overdrive. He has to shout to be heard above four dust vacuums and four buzzing Dremels.

The boys cycle on and off the power stations, taking breaks when their hands go numb from vibration. One teenager comes over with a small nick on his finger.

Metcalfe asks him what happened.

“I wanted to know what it felt like,” he says, sheepishly, holding out his finger.

Metcalfe tells him to go wash the tiny wound while he fishes out a Band-aid from the First Aid kit. He shakes his head and smiles. “Can you believe that? He wanted to know what it felt like.”

For more information on this and other summer programs in Ottawa, contact the OICC at 613-744-3133.



Dion Metcalfe, in green, instructs young carvers on how to use power tools to grind down stone and tusk.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674carving_studio_a_gathering_place_for_ottawa_inuit_youth/

Saskatoon judge to hear Financial Transparency Act arguments

By Andrea Hill, The StarPhoenix July 28, 2015



Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox

A court battle between the federal government and some Saskatchewan First Nations is coming to Saskatoon next month.

The federal government announced in December that it is taking six First Nations — including the Ochapowace Cree Nation, Onion Lake Cree Nation and Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan — to court to force them to post their financial information online.

In a notice of application to federal court, the government said the six groups failed or refused to comply with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which came into effect in 2013, despite ample time and “repeated demands” by the minister of aboriginal affairs.

Onion Lake Cree Nation and the Sawridge First Nation near Slave Lake in Alberta have requested that court proceedings be delayed. Their arguments are set to be heard in by a federal court judge sitting in Saskatoon Court of Queen’s Bench on Aug. 19 and 20, according to court documents.

Under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, First Nations have to publish consolidated financial statements that outline their chief and councillors' salaries on the Government of Canada website by July of each year.

The deadline for submitting documents for 2014-15 is by the end of today. Bands that fail to do so will have their federal funding cut.

“Beginning September 1st, 2015, bands that have yet to comply with the law will see funding for non-essential services withheld. Further actions may include seeking court orders to compel compliance,” Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said in a press release Tuesday.

“Let me be clear, our government will take action, according to the provisions of the law, against First Nation governments that do not follow the law.”

Last year — the first time First Nations were required to post financial information — the government granted a four-month extension before pulling funding. By then, 98 per cent of the country's 581 First Nations had published the mandated documents.

Valcourt said no extension will be issued this year.

By the end of the business day Tuesday, the 2014-15 financial reports for most Saskatchewan First Nations were not available online, though a spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada said its website is still being updated as documents are received.

Chiefs of the Ochapowace, Onion Lake and Thunderchild bands, who have not posted all of the required financial documents for 2013-14 or 2014-15, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Saskatoon+judge+hear+Financial+Transparency+arguments/11249682/story.html>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Nunavut court: Anglican catechist acquitted on 30-year-old sex charge

“The gloom of history obscures truth”



Justice Robert Kilpatrick acquitted an Anglican lay helper on a sex charge that dates back 30 years, but not until after he pondered the problems faced by the court when confronted with conflicting stories from the past that are difficult to corroborate: "The gloom of history obscures truth. As months turn into years, as years turn into decades, the process of distilling historical truth from fiction becomes increasingly difficult," Kilpatrick said. (FILE PHOTO)

After descending into what he called a 30-year-old "place of shadow and uncertainty," Justice Robert Kilpatrick, in a written judgment released July 20, acquitted a prominent elder and church leader from Cape Dorset on a charge of sexually assaulting a family friend.

Naudla Oshweetok, now aged about 67, faced a single charge of sexual assault related to an incident alleged to have occurred in an Iqaluit hotel room in 1985 or 1986.

But after a trial that included testimony from the accused, the complainant, and the complainant's sister, Kilpatrick said he was left with reasonable doubt as to Oshweetok's guilt and had no choice but to find him not guilty.

He also discussed, at length, the difficulties that prosecutors face when attempting to prove allegations that are many years old.

"Forensic investigation does not readily illuminate time's darker recesses. Factual certainty becomes harder to achieve as the memories of witnesses and participants slowly degrade over time," Kilpatrick said.

Oshweetok, an early president of the Baffin Regional Inuit Association and a delegate to the Inuit Circumpolar Council's 1977 founding meeting in Alaska, served many years as a catechist, or lay helper, in the Anglican church.

He worked at Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik as one of its original Inuit court workers and also served as a justice of the peace.

The complainant, a woman named CA, alleged Oshweetok invited her to an Iqaluit hotel for dinner some time in 1985 or 1986 on a visit to Iqaluit, where the woman, aged 19 or 20, worked as an interpreter-translator.

At the time, Oshweetok was a friend of CA's father, an Anglican minister, who in earlier years was often invited to her family home for food and fellowship, Kilpatrick's judgment said.

"They talk of old times and common acquaintances. There is nothing said or done by either CA or Mr. Oshweetok that has sexual overtones," the judgment said.

After dinner, Oshweetok invited the young woman to continue the visit in his hotel room. Seeing no reason to suspect him, she agreed, the judgment said.

As for what happened next, each witness tells a different story.

The complainant said she sat at the foot of the bed. She said Oshweetok then pushed her down gently, unbuttoned her pants, pulled them down and completed an act of sexual intercourse without her consent.

After that, CA got dressed and left right away, the judgment said.

Oshweetok, on the other hand, said he asked the young woman if she wanted to have sex and that she said yes, the judgment said.

After they had consensual sex, she got dressed. Oshweetok then gave her cab fare to get home.

The woman told the court she was too scared to tell anyone about what happened until about eight years after the incident, when she told her father and sister.

In 2012, she met Oshweetok at an Anglican church building in his community to hear him make an in-person apology to her.

But Oshweetok, who is married, had a different view of that meeting, Kilpatrick's judgment said

He said its purpose was to give each of them a chance to apologize to each other for participating in an act of adultery.

Also in 2012, CA wrote to various Anglican bishops asking them to end the church's association with Oshweetok.

She also asked church officials for financial compensation.

The Anglican diocese responded by suspending Oshweetok from his duties for three months for having committed adultery.

But they also told her that they would only compensate her if he was charged and convicted of a sex offence.

That's when CA went to the RCMP to make a complaint about Oshweetok, the judgment said.

When she appeared as a witness, CA's sister, YA, told the court she heard CA state that Oshweetok raped her multiple times and that she planned to seek financial compensation.

"The Court heard testimony from CA's sister YA. YA describes her relationship with CA as a close and open one. YA relates that CA disclosed to her some years ago that she had been raped by Mr. Oshweetok in Community X and that this had occurred on multiple occasions," Kilpatrick said.

After looking at all the evidence, Kilpatrick said he had no choice but to find Oshweetok not guilty.

But he did so only after a lengthy exploration of an earlier acquittal, dating to 2008, on a set of charges against former teacher Ed Horne.

He said the passage of time and the long delay in prosecuting the case now made it impossible to corroborate the stories told by both the accused and the complainant.

"Sometimes the delay is such that proof of an offence beyond a reasonable doubt becomes a standard that is simply unattainable in human terms. Sometimes the delay is such that the weapons necessary for an adequate defence cannot realistically be made available," the 2008 judgment said.

He also said Oshweetok "was not shaken" in cross-examination.

And although he also believes the complainant's story, Kilpatrick said he had no choice but to acquit the accused.

"In the absence of any significant damage to credibility or reliability sustained through the process of examination, the Court is unable to determine with the necessary degree of legal certainty who or what to believe," he said.

The complainant's name may not be published or broadcast.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_court_anglican_catechist_acquitted_on_30-year-old_sex_charge/

RCMP pays out undisclosed amount for “horrificing” treatment of First Nations woman in Saskatchewan

[National News](#) | July 28, 2015 by [Larissa Burnouf](#) |



(Ethel Pelly sitting at her lawyer's office after settlement was reached. Photo: Larissa Burnouf/APTN)

Larissa Burnouf

APTN National News

YORKTON, SASK — A First Nations woman has won an out-of-court settlement for an undisclosed amount of money against the Yorkton RCMP for mistreatment following her arrest more than three years ago.

Ethel Pelly, 42, was arrested and charged with a drug offence in February 2012 and taken to the Yorkton holding cells.

In an interview with APTN National News, Pelly said that's where her “horrificing” treatment at the hands of the RCMP began that started with being stripped of her underwear.

“Is this the way you guys operate?” Pelly remembers asking the officers. “You let the women come take your underwear while the men come and look at you?”

Pelly said she explained to the police that she was having her period and bleeding profusely at the time. She told APTN that a female officer stripped her of her underwear anyway, leaving her locked in her cell in pants and a see-through tank top, bleeding through her clothes.

“The man wasn’t even looking at my eyes when he was talking to me,” said said. “He was just looking at my chest” said Pelly fighting back tears.



Pelly was arrested in February 2012 and held by Yorkton RCMP

According to RCMP records, Pelly was locked in her cell for nearly 15 hours and “miscommunication” resulted in her not having access to water for her entire stay.

“My pants were soaked in blood, the sink was full of blood, the toilet was full of blood. The stench in there was terrible. I couldn’t flush the toilet and I told them and they wouldn’t help me. Nobody would help me.”

Pelly’s lawyer Tom Campbell said he received the police video taken the next morning.

“The investigating officer attempted to take a statement from her later the next day and she’s soaked in blood. She’s clearly distraught,” said Campbell. “And the officer clearly ignores her distress.”

When Campbell contacted the RCMP, Pelly was sent a letter of apology explaining that detainees are stripped of underwear to prevent them from self-harm and from damaging cells. The letter went on to explain that the water was turned off so she couldn’t destroy any evidence that may have been on or in her body.

The RCMP acknowledged miscommunication on their behalf, which left Pelly without water for a total of 14 hours, agreeing that was unacceptable.

“That apology letter is not good enough, not in the least. It is not good enough at all,” said Pelly. “I would like actually like to see his resignation because he knew... he gave the orders to lock me in there. And he left me in there for that long”



Pelly (right) with her lawyer Tom Campbell. Larissa Burnouf/APTN

Pelly did not receive the officers resignation but she did receive an out-of-court, undisclosed settlement from the RCMP for her treatment within the Yorkton RCMP holding cells.

“I’m Glad it is over with but not too pleased they still have their jobs” said Pelly. “They were disciplined and I requested they go back to school and educate themselves in Native Studies and learn the importance of the women and their Moon Time. I also requested they go to First Nation schools and talk to them about their procedures and what their policies are.”

Pelly said it’s a small victory as her trust and faith in policing has completely changed.

“My feeling towards the so called ‘serve and protect’ is lost. I have no trust in the RCMP and look at them in a negative way now. I will never look at them the same.” \

Pelly is glad to put the whole ordeal behind her and pleased that the police acknowledged her terrible treatment and hopes her fight will help others who faced similar experiences to come forward and bring change to the RCMP.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/07/28/rcmp-pays-out-undisclosed-amount-for-horrifying-treatment-of-first-nations-woman-in-saskatchewan/>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Aboriginal Children in Care report calls for action

By Taylor Rattray, Leader-Post July 25, 2015



A report examining the high number of aboriginal children in care has Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth hoping for change.

REGINA — A report examining the high number of aboriginal children in care has Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth hoping for change.

"I do commend the premiers for this initiative. I don't think they would ask for this paper to then just sit on it," said Bob Pringle. "So I'm optimistic that it will be on the front burner and many of us will be pushing for that, because it's really beyond time for action."

Last week, the Council of the Federation, the organization of Canada's premiers, discussed *Aboriginal Children in Care: Report to Canada's Premiers*. The report, requested by the premiers, examines the over-representation of aboriginal children in the child welfare system.

Using data from the 2011 National Household Survey, the report found that, while aboriginal people account for 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population, 48 per cent of the 30,000 children and youth in foster care are aboriginal.

As well, 25 per cent of the child population in Saskatchewan is aboriginal, yet 65 per cent of children in care are aboriginal.

To address these issues, the report suggests three areas of action. Pringle said these coincide with areas he has highlighted in the past.

"One: The need to develop strategies to address the root causes of child neglect and child abuse in certain cases. Secondly, the prevention and early intervention approaches. And (lastly), to support the system by modernizing some of the tools and looking at better training, accountability and standards," said Pringle.

The number of aboriginal children in the care of the Ministry of Social Services has declined over the past five years, Pringle said, but the number of children coming into care has not. He hopes the report will help address the remaining areas.

“With our premier being involved, (we) now have the chance to look at the best practices in other jurisdictions and hopefully put those on the front burner and implement some those in Saskatchewan,” Pringle said.

Pringle said he was disappointed the federal government did not participate in the report, despite invitations from the premiers. He said the next step is to co-ordinate a national response.

“Hopefully at some point, the premiers can draw the federal government in. However, there’s still a lot they can do as premiers, so that’s good,” said Pringle. “Children are our greatest resource and so we do have major challenges on this front of child welfare.”

The Ministry of Social Services declined to comment on Council of the Federation discussions.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/life/Aboriginal+Children+Care+report+calls+action/11240922/story.html>

Six Nations Polytechnic gets \$1.4 million

By [Michael-Allan Marion](#), Brantford Expositor

Thursday, July 23, 2015 4:37:12 EDT PM



Rebecca Jamieson, president of Six Nations Polytechnic, shakes hands with Brant MP Phil McColeman after an announcement that it will receive \$1.4 million in federal funding. (Michael-Allan Marion / The Expositor)

OHSWEKEN – Six Nations Polytechnic has landed a \$1.4-million grant from the federal government to further skills and training programs and aboriginal language studies for its students.

The grant is nearly 10% of a total \$15 million going under the federal government's post-secondary partnerships program toward 73 projects across the country to assist post-

secondary institutions in delivering college and university level courses that respond to local labour market needs.

It was announced in a ceremony at Six Nations Polytechnic on Thursday by Brant MP Phil McColeman on behalf of Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

Because Polytech can't get access to regular government post-secondary programs, "the funding received from the federal government through post-secondary partnerships is critical as it supports programs that affirm cultural identity while developing understanding across cultures," Polytech president Rebecca Jamieson said while expressing her gratitude.

"These two outcomes are essential to student success in education, training and employment, and to maintaining positive relationships with indigenous peoples into the future for the benefit of all."

McColeman said in an interview that he lobbied Valcourt to win the largest share of the money.

"We were aware of the large ask of Six Nations Polytechnic and we worked diligently to achieve as much as they were requesting," he said.

"I say kudos to this institution for showing they deserve it. Since I've been MP these past seven years, I've watched Six Nations Polytechnic has serve as a model for the country.

"I've been hugely impressed from day one with the professionalism of this institution."

The grant was announced with Six Nations councillors Helen Miller and Melba Thomas and Brantford city councillors Cheryl Antoski and John Utley in attendance.

"It's really a good thing," Miller, who was representing elected Chief Ava Hill, said of the grant.

"We know how important it is to preserve our languages."

With a twinkle, she added "it's a good thing there's an election on."

A substantial chunk of the money will go to further instruction in the Ogwehonweh languages of Cayuga and Mohawk and degree-level studies in indigenous languages.

Jamieson said Polytech will use the money to further its mission in rekindling aboriginal language and culture. She tied the mission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report on the damage done to both by residential schools.

“Having one the most infamous residential schools operating in the territory, the people of Six Nations are only too familiar with the legacy of the residential school experience,” she said.

“The residential school experience and the impacts of unbalanced and unhealthy relationships across cultures has touched us all at Six Nations in some way. SNP holds a special obligation to the Six Nations community to be the formal post-secondary institute to ensure that our indigenous knowledge and languages do not disappear from the face of this earth.”

michael-allan.marion@sunmedia.ca

Twitter.com/EXPMarion

Six Nations Polytechnic has received \$1.4 million from the federal government's post-secondary partnerships program toward nine proposed endeavours in language, culture and skills and training.

They are:

\$232,650 for language degree studies;

\$225,500 toward an indigenous sustainability degree;

\$210,100 for indigenous visual arts;

\$144,100 for financial management;

\$117,700 for peace building;

\$114,400 for cultural fluency;

\$100,100 for Mohawk language instruction;

\$100,100 for Cayuga language instruction;

\$62,590 for principal of First Nations schools.

Direct Link: <http://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/2015/07/23/six-nations-polytechnic-gets-14-million>

Kate Sharl Foundation helps send Cree boy with autism to camp

7-year-old Brent Hester of Waskaganish, Que., connects with other kids at AOK summer day camp

By Christopher Herodier, Susan Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 25, 2015 6:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jul 25, 2015 6:00 AM CT



Brent Hester, 7, went to a summer day camp for children with autism with help from the Kate Sharl Foundation. His mother says he would wake up early excited to go play with new friends, learned to sing and became more open to conversation. (submitted by Candice Diamond)

For seven year-old Brent Hester of Waskaganish, Que., summer 2015 has the makings of the best one yet, because he got to spend time and play with other children who are much like himself — active, energetic and living with autism.

With the help of the Kate Sharl Foundation, a charity that offers financial assistance for Cree children living with special needs in Eeyou Istchee, Brent got the chance to attend AOK Summer Camp, run by Autism Ontario near Toronto.

His mom Candice Diamond says Brent made friends with the group of children he was with at the day camp, learned how to sing and become more open to conversation.



Fundraising efforts, like this recent one in Waswanipi, Que., raise money for the Kate Sharl Foundation, a charity offering help for Cree children living with special needs.

"Brent was always shy here in Waskaganish," she said.

"But after some time at the camp, we noticed that he started introducing himself to people. At a restaurant, he'd be saying to people 'Hi, I'm Brent.'"

Diamond says she started to notice changes in Brent's behaviour.

"He wanted to leave us as soon as we'd arrive at the camp, and in the mornings he'd be up early, knowing that he'd be going to camp."

Before arriving at the camp, the family wondered about the wisdom of what they were doing.

"It was very scary," said Diamond, who says Brent has a habit of running off to explore.

"My mom got so worried, that she was telling me, 'We should disguise ourselves, and watch him from a distance at the restaurant.'"

Diamond and Floyd Hester, Brent's dad, had to fundraise to cover the cost of travelling to the camp. The family also got help from the Kate Sharl Foundation to cover the tuition.



'He met a girl there, and after a while, they were holding hands,' said Candice Diamond, Brent's mother. 'It was so sweet and touching, and I was feeling that my boy met a true friend in that little girl.'

Kate Sharl was born with special needs in Oujé-Bougoumou. Her parents, Harry Sharl and Anouk Raphael, struggled to pay for some of her basic needs for her condition, where she needed a special van to get her to her treatments.

She died about seven years ago, and after a year passed, the Kate Sharl Foundation was born.

"The memory of Kate Sharl is why the foundation was created," said Judy Nakogee, one of the co-founders of the Foundation.

Nakogee also works for the Cree Nation Government as a special needs advisor and offered support to the family in the year before Kate died.

"Because we know some of our children need to be helped in any way possible, where some need to get special help because they need to learn sign language as they were born deaf, or some need to have their parents learn how others cope or become teachers to their own children, that is why we work hard for this foundation."

Brent's parents are hoping to send him to the AOK camp again next summer.

"This experience has been a plus for my son," said Diamond.

"One memorable moment that I will say that will stick with me for a very long time is he met a girl there, and after a while, they were holding hands," she said.

"It was so sweet and touching, and I was feeling it that my boy met a true friend in that little girl."

The Color Run, a fundraiser for the [Kate Sharl Foundation](http://www.katesharl.org), will be held Aug. 15 in Montreal. For more information contact Connie at 514-636-8501, or Judy at: 418-770-4545.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/kate-sharl-foundation-helps-send-cree-boy-with-autism-to-camp-1.3164133>

McMaster aims to grow number of indigenous grad students in Canada

KRISTY HOFFMAN

HAMILTON — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jul. 26, 2015 7:36PM EDT

Last updated Sunday, Jul. 26, 2015 11:04PM EDT

An Ontario university has launched a new program to increase the number of indigenous students in Canadian graduate schools – historically an area of study where they are underrepresented.

When McMaster University selected recipients for a scholarship created for aboriginal students in 2010, committee members noticed there were few candidates to choose from. That realization became the catalyst for a program taking place at the university this summer.

The Indigenous Undergraduate Summer Research Scholars program started on July 2 when 14 undergraduate students from across Ontario arrived on campus.

Among them was Juliette Wemigwans, a mother of five, who shyly admitted to being the “oldest student here.”

“I never, ever, ever thought in my life I would go to university – ever,” said the Odawa woman, who is from the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in Ontario.

Not only did she proceed to do just that – Ms. Wemigwans is entering her fourth year of sociology at Ontario’s Algoma University in the fall – but thanks to the McMaster program she is considering graduate school, too.

“The people that we’ve had talk to us about graduate studies have made it seem relatable, achievable,” said participant George Doxtater, 23.

Mr. Doxtater is from Six Nations of the Grand River, a community 25 kilometres southwest of Hamilton, and is working on an undergraduate degree in linguistics at McMaster.

“You know when you see something on a pedestal and you can’t attain it?” he asked. “[Those involved in the program] showed us there’s a ladder here and you can walk up there.”

The gap between the number of indigenous people earning university degrees and the rest of the population is significant. Universities Canada – which represents 97 public and private universities and university degree-level colleges – notes in a June, 2015, report that 9.8 per cent of indigenous people in Canada have a university degree, compared with 26.5 per cent of non-indigenous people.

Data on graduate students is harder to come by. Statistics Canada’s 2011 national household survey indicated that 1.46 per cent of aboriginal persons aged 25 to 64 received a masters’ degree, compared with 5.24 per cent among the non-indigenous population.

Allison Sekuler, acting vice-president of research and psychology professor at McMaster, was inspired to create the program after hearing about a similar one in the United States. She said when aboriginals do access postsecondary education, it can be in a “roundabout,” or “circuitous,” way.

That could mean entering university later in life, or obtaining a PhD as a single mom, Dr. Sekuler said.

And there are many factors as to why, but most relate to coming from families with members – parents, particularly – who are not educated.

“There is a feeling of isolation, and it leads to this sense of questioning. An imposter syndrome, almost,” she said.

Standing in her lab, Dr. Sekuler explained that indigenous students’ presence on campus is equally beneficial to the university and the indigenous community.

“We’ll start to see where some of these disconnects are,” she said. “We don’t even think about some of the obstacles we’ve put in the way of indigenous students. If you don’t come from the background, you don’t see it.”

To turn her idea into a reality, Dr. Sekuler needed someone who came from the background. That’s when Bernice Downey, a medical anthropologist with Oji-Cree and Celtic heritage, was hired to co-ordinate the Indigenous Undergraduate Summer Research Scholars program.

After McMaster University’s provost council’s office provided \$368,000 in funding for two years through the Strategic Alignment Priorities fund, Dr. Downey got to work.

She collaborated with McMaster University’s Indigenous Studies program, which is partnering the project, and broader indigenous communities to plan for the first summer. Now, four indigenous graduate student mentors, 12 faculty supervisors and five indigenous scholars are teaching the undergrads about graduate student life and studies.

The program comes less than two months after Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission released 94 calls to action in June, seven devoted to improving education.

“The TRC process and report gives us that opportunity to look at, ‘Okay, what’s the strategic vision?’” Dr. Downey said. “I’m sure other institutions are doing innovative work too, but this is an example of something that can lead to longer-term change.”

For McMaster University, it is already on the horizon: In the fall, three indigenous undergraduate students from the summer program will enter the institution as graduate students.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/mcmaster-aims-to-grow-number-of-indigenous-grad-students-in-canada/article25715514/>

Aboriginal classes mandatory for Education students

New course to focus on how to teach Aboriginal topics

July 28, 2015

[Victoria Gibson](#)



Bonnie Jane Maracle teaching a Mohawk Language and Culture at Queen's.

Starting next summer, all B. Ed candidates will take a 12-week course on Aboriginal education.

The new course will focus on training B.Ed candidates to teach Aboriginal topics and create an inclusive environment for Aboriginal students. It's one of several changes to the teacher's college program that followed a provincially mandated switch from a one-year, two-semester program to a two-year, four-semester program.

Students taking the course will complete 12 hours of content spread across 12 weeks. According to the Faculty of Education, the course curriculum will be designed after an instructor has been hired.

Lindsay Morcom, coordinator of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP), said the course is a step in the right direction for Queen's.

Canadian post-secondary institutions don't have a collective strategy for Aboriginal education, despite the important role they could play, she said.

"There's a strategy for elementary and secondary [schools], and that's really good work and they've put a lot of effort and energy in it," Morcom said. But teachers in those schools must be equipped to teach Aboriginal topics, she said.

"If we have teachers in elementary and secondary schools who don't have enough awareness of Indigenous issues, Indigenous intellectual tradition and culture, then they're not going to be able to appropriately enact those strategies," she said.

Morcom said it's pivotal that Canada's teachers are equipped to handle intercultural issues in the classroom.

According to Morcom, an education gap exists between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students. She said only one out of three Aboriginal students graduate from high school.

"That's just something shameful," she said. "If we can turn out teachers who are able to engage those learners, and make them feel comfortable in the school and give them a culturally appropriate education where they can see themselves in the classroom, we're all going to be better off."

Although the curriculum has not yet been set, Morcom said an important part of the course will be teaching the culture of present-day Aboriginal people along with Indigenous history.

"We find a lot of erasure in teaching about Aboriginal people. It's always taught pre-contact [with Europeans], but we're still here," she said.

Peter Chin, the assistant head of education, said Aboriginal education isn't new to the Queen's B.Ed program, but the new course reinforces the faculty's commitment to Aboriginal education.

"Just because we [now] have a course in Aboriginal education, doesn't mean we weren't doing aboriginal education elsewhere," he said.

Chin said several courses in the program, including two during the first year of the teacher's college program, already include content on teaching Aboriginal topics and creating an inclusive teaching environment.

"It's a required element, because we believe it's important," he said.

Chin said the faculty also engages its students with Aboriginal cultures through regular events on West Campus, including weekly smudging ceremonies and an Indigenous welcoming at the annual Bachelor of Education opening ceremonies.

"We're a faculty of education. We teach about inclusion," he said. "The best way [to be inclusive] is to understand who it is you're teaching and to model what we stand for."

— *With files from Sebastian Leck*

Direct Link: <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2015-07-28/news/aboriginal-classes-mandatory-for-education-students/>

Tuition-Free Leadership Course for Aboriginal Women

Christa Dao

7/27/2015



A non-profit organization is now accepting applications for a tuition-free course in Prince Rupert. The course will teach leadership and development skills. But there's just one catch - you need to be a woman.

Come October, Prince Rupert's Northwest Community College campus will house a leadership development course for Aboriginal women. The tuition-free program will focus on women in leadership roles as well as providing them with the skillset they need to be key leaders in their community.

For Cecilia Grayson, she says the course taught her more about herself than she ever thought possible.

"I learned how looking inside myself, to learn about my values, to rediscover my values and what my values are, define them properly and knowing my purpose and how to apply that to my leadership skills."

There are 10 sessions in total. Food will be provided and Minerva Foundation's Community Engagement Coordinator Nicole-Ann Poitras says it's great for women who want to improve themselves.

"The goal of the community leadership program, is to encourage women to take a seat at the table and affect change in their spheres of influence, and community and throughout province and it's project based. It's made up of different workshops, and I don't want to say homework but different work that you would do outside the program timing to solidify everything in the program.

While the course is aimed at aboriginal women, Poitras says the course will accept non-aboriginal women as well.

"We do most of our programming within aboriginal communities, but that doesn't mean that there are just aboriginal women in those communities right? So it's open to everyone, but it is culturally sensitive to aboriginal culture"



Grayson says the course gave her the courage to continue her dreams.

"Just do it, really take the time. You are investing in your future, yourself, and it's something that is definitely worth while. And it's brought me to a new level, and I'm actually starting my own clothing collection and the website will be launched this week."

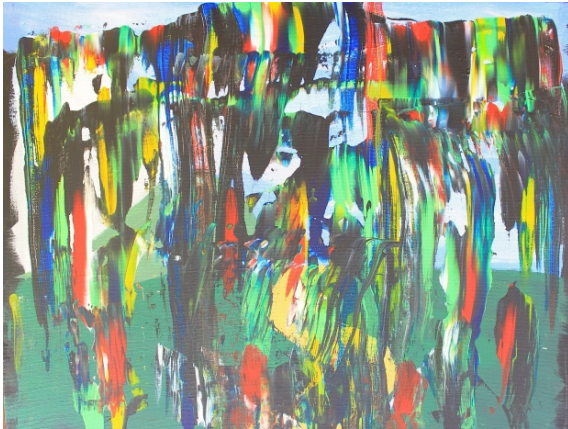
"The price tag for a course like this is estimated at \$3600 per person, but that fee is all covered. The only thing you need to do is apply.

More information on the program can be found on the Minerva Foundation website at <https://theminervafoundation.com/lead/combining-our-strength/community-leadership/>.

Direct Link: <http://www.cjfw.ca/News/Story.aspx?ID=2183625>

Sudbury Aboriginal youth explain in acrylic why they dropped out of high school

'Without their voices, there won't be change,' says Masters of Education student Amber White



For eight Aboriginal high school drop outs in Sudbury, a painting is worth a thousand words.

The youths, who spend time at the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre in Sudbury, were approached by Masters of Education student Amber White from Queen's University to explain why they left high school — but she wanted that explanation with a twist.

They were asked to give their reasons in the form an acrylic painting. Immediately, the youths were keen to show their stories, White said.

"They just dove right in and — within ear and eyeshot of each other — just started creating."



Amber White, a Masters of Education student at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., says of the self-expression painting project, "[w]ithout their voices, there won't be change." (Yonfei Wu)

White said in that process, common themes started to emerge on the canvas: racism, loneliness, teenage pregnancy and poor socioeconomic status all tended to play a part the the decision to leave high school.

What she found, though, was another common theme: self-reflection.

"Every single participant ... took full responsibility for their actions. They didn't blame anyone for their current conditions," she said.

Those eight paintings are now on display at a gallery at Queen's University in a show called ["Speaking Through Acrylic: Potholes, Loss and Dreams."](#)

White said she hopes school boards in Sudbury, as well as the broader community, someday see the pieces in person, and she's able to share what she learned.

In a press release, White is quoted as saying, "I travelled to Sudbury and they trusted me ... This was a humbling experience and I hope it resonates. It's important to know why urban aboriginal youth withdraw from mainstream schools. Without their voices, there won't be change."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/sudbury-aboriginal-youth-explain-in-acrylic-why-they-dropped-out-of-high-school-1.3172040>

McMaster breaking barriers for indigenous students



Josh Manitowabi, Jessica Hunter and Jessica Bonilla-Dampney for round circle story._ John Rennison The Hamilton Spectator_7/27/15

Hamilton Spectator
By [Joel OpHardt](#)

Jul 29, 2015

An innovative new program at McMaster University is breaking down barriers to encourage more indigenous scholars to test the daunting waters of graduate studies.

For the past three weeks, 14 indigenous students from across Ontario have been on campus, immersed in learning that educators hope will encourage them to pursue postgraduate degrees.

Josh Manitowabi is planning to attend a master's program in the fall. The 37-year-old from Manitoulin Island recalls being the only native student in the majority of his undergrad classes in history and indigenous studies — a factor that made further education seem unattainable.

"Times are really changing," said Manitowabi. "In the late '80s and early '90s, you didn't have many indigenous pursuing PhDs ... it's so important for the future of our people that we encourage younger students to start pursuing graduate school."

The six-week program, extended to any undergraduate or recently graduated students in Ontario, is the first of its kind in Canada. It attempts to rectify Stats Canada's findings that non-indigenous people are 3½ times more likely to obtain a master's degree than their indigenous counterparts.

"We wanted to let students know that they are not alone out there, that they're not the only ones that want to be a physicist or a historian ... that there is a route they can take to achieve their dreams and their goals," said Allison Sekuler, professor of psychology and acting vice-president of research at McMaster.

Coincidentally, McMaster's program comes as a timely response to a recent report from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which called for a more concerted effort to improve indigenous education.

The idea came after Sekuler attended a conference in the U.S. where she learned about a program that helps underprivileged and first-generation students get an education.

When the university offered \$360,000 this spring to run a two-year pilot program to help indigenous students, Sekuler and her team jumped into action. With the help of program co-ordinator Bernice Downey, a postdoctorate medical anthropologist of indigenous heritage, 12 professors who volunteered their services and four postgraduate students serving as mentors, the program was up and running in a few months.

The hope is to surround the indigenous students with the combination of mentorship and real-world training they need to feel like they belong in postgraduate studies.

The students are hired and paid as regular researchers, but the program also extends beyond that. Outside of their research responsibilities, the students are involved in workshops and community building exercises, such as medicine walks, talking circles and excursions.

Some are given accommodations, food, parking and child care if needed.

"We wanted to break down barriers for the students," said Downey. "When you remove the barriers, they don't come in with blank slates."

Being surrounded by more than a dozen other indigenous students learning about proper research techniques, participating in graduate workshops and community building exercises has already left an indelible mark on many in the program.

"It makes me feel like it's more attainable, and like I have somewhere to go when I need help," said Jessica Hinton, a 23-year-old from Brockville who is pursuing a master's in the fall.

For now, the program has received no guarantee of funding beyond the pilot. Interest is growing, though, and Sekuler hopes the project will expand.

"No one else is doing it right now, so we're happy to be leading the charge, but I think it would be terrific if we could make it a Canada-wide program or even a North American-wide program or an international program."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5764872-mcmaster-breaking-barriers-for-indigenous-students/>

New online courses on Aboriginal issues

By: Sudbury Northern Life Staff

| Jul 29, 2015 - 9:00 PM |



The University of Sudbury and Trent University have partnered together to create and offer two new online courses, the first of their kind in Canada, aimed at bridging the knowledge gap on urban Aboriginal issues. Supplied photo.

Partnership to introduce two new courses by Jan. 2016.

The University of Sudbury and Trent University have partnered together to create and offer two new online courses, the first of their kind in Canada, aimed at bridging the

knowledge gap on urban Aboriginal issues.

The two universities will alternate the delivery of the courses over the next five years, with Trent University offering the courses for the 2015-2016 academic year.

"There are very few courses in Canada that deal with urban Aboriginal issues and as the majority of Aboriginal people now live in cities it is very important that research and teaching now focus in this area." said Dr. Kevin Fitzmaurice, a faculty member at the University of Sudbury's Indigenous Studies Department in a news release.

"As the courses will be offered right across Canada, we anticipate students from many other universities as well as from more remote Aboriginal communities where on-line courses make universities much more accessible. Students from Laurentian, Toronto, York, and Ryerson should be especially interested in these courses because of their Sudbury and Toronto content."

Beginning in September 2015, Indigenous Peoples in Urban Centers will be accessible online to students across Canada.

The course will be drawn from two major studies on urban Aboriginal experience: the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP), the largest study ever done on Aboriginal people in the city of Toronto; and the Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF), which examined Aboriginal issues in five Ontario cities, including Sudbury.

The second course, Indigenous Peoples City as Home, will be available in January 2016, and will be a comparative study of urban Aboriginal people in Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

"I am very excited about the development and teaching of these courses, they are incorporating some of the most up-to-date and extensive scholarly research on this subject in conjunction with a diversity of video guest interviews with key leaders and practitioners in the urban Aboriginal community." said Fitzmaurice.

"It's important, especially in light of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that people have a better understanding of the issues facing urban Aboriginal people," said Dr. McCaskill, professor of Indigenous Studies at Trent University.

"These courses are filling an important knowledge gap."

The new courses are funded through a province-wide COU / MTCU grant.

For more information on the online courses which will be offered this year by Trent University please see: www.trentu.ca/indigenousstudies

Direct Link: <http://www.northernlife.ca/news/localNews/2015/07/29-universities-sudbury.aspx>

Aboriginal Health

22 First Nations will now have pharmacy support

[Molly Gibson Kirby](#) / Thompson Citizen
July 24, 2015 12:00 AM

Muskehki Pharmacy Distributors LP (Muskehki Pharmacy) announced on July 20 that the company was awarded with a one-year contract by Health Canada to provide pharmacy support services, as well as medical supplies to 22 northern Manitoba First Nations. Starting in August, Muskehki Pharmacy will provide these standard medical needs to nursing stations.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief David Harper says this has been a long time coming and he is excited for the opportunity it will bring. “It opens up the doors for more pharmacists and for more work. At the end of the day someone has to deliver the medicine, someone has to be at the counter, educating the First Nations. This is what is key for the whole process. It’s run and owned by First Nations.”

Harper continued by saying that it’s been a group effort from all chiefs.

Muskehki Pharmacy is a health partnership owned by Wabung Developments Ltd, the economic development entity of the MKO and North West Company Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of Winnipeg-based The North West Company Inc.

President of Wabung Developments and Muskehki Pharmacy, Chief Irvin Sinclair says the contract is for one year because it’s a probation period, but hopes the contract gets pushed to the maximum length of three years. “This is a probationary period and we want to show how competent we are and professionalism that is requires. We are more than equipped and ready to take this program on, and show Health Canada that we are more than capable of handling our own affairs.

Derek Reimer, director of business development for Muskehki Pharmacy and North West, noted that the partnership with MKO started in 2010. “Basically the partnership relates to health businesses and our focus primarily was on trying to secure the pharmacy contract for Northern Manitoba nursing stations.”

Reimer finished off by saying this partnership will help everyone involved focus on employment, training and capacity-building for First Nation communities.

Harper hopes with starting this partnership other communities in Ontario and Saskatchewan will see the success, and achieve something along the same lines in their communities.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/22-first-nations-will-now-have-pharmacy-support-1.2009776#sthash.rcgU68j3.dpuf>

Pregnant aboriginal women find 'world of difference' in Edmonton inner-city program

By Nikki Wiart, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 27, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jul 27, 2015 2:34 PM ET



It's not often a job description includes monitoring fetal heart rates and taking blood samples in the back of a car or in the bathroom of a fast food joint.



Falon Quinn is eight months pregnant, and says HER Pregnancy is giving her the help she needs to keep her baby. (CBC)

But that's exactly what employees of an inner city prenatal program in Edmonton do.

At-risk pregnant women on the street are "incredibly scared of the system," says Marliiss Taylor, a nurse who helped found HER Pregnancy — which stands for Healthy, Empowered and Resilient — in 2008.

HER is an aggressive outreach program for pregnant women living on the streets. It's based out of Boyle Street Community Services' Streetworks program in downtown Edmonton and it's seeing a lot of success.

In an independent review of the agency, Children's Services predicted that 95 to 100 per cent of HER's clients would have lost their children to apprehension. Instead, 52 per cent of those women were actually successfully parenting — photographic proof of which lines the walls of the program's pregnancy room.

Falon Quinn is eight months pregnant, and says HER Pregnancy is giving her the help she needs to keep her baby.

"I would probably still be homeless — pregnant and homeless — not knowing what to do," Quinn said. "Probably doing drugs and alcohol if I didn't have the supports I do today."

That success hasn't been lost on the provincial government either. As of early July, Alberta's new NDP government promised the program an additional \$200,000, on top of the \$1.4 million over three years promised in 2014 by the Progressive Conservatives.

Alberta Health has also provided funding for two similar programs in Red Deer and Calgary.

Aboriginal focus, shared experience

Morgan Chalifoux, a pregnancy support worker with the program, is Métis; she's been through the system, lived on the streets and was a teen mom.



Morgan Chalifoux, (bottom left), a pregnancy support worker with the program, previously lived on the streets and was a teen mom. She says those shared experience helps her connect with clients. Kristen

Rowan (top left), Trish Gladue (top right), and Nadine Santin work with pregnant at risk women in Edmonton. (Nikki Wiart)

"Honestly, if I wasn't aboriginal, if I didn't have the experience, if I didn't use when I was on the street, if I didn't understand what it was like to have my son threatened to be taken away from me ... I wouldn't be able to have the success that I have now with the clients," Chalifoux said.

According to Erin Konsmo, from the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, these shared experiences "make a world of difference."

"When you see somebody that looks like you, that can speak about communities that are similar to yours, experiences that are similar to yours, you're going to have a much safer experience as a young mom."

Ninety per cent of HER clients are aboriginal, including Quinn, who is from Saddle Lake First Nation. That's a large reason why 50 per cent of Streetworks' staff is also aboriginal.

"Indigenous-to-indigenous relationships are super important," said Konsmo, who has a Métis and Nehiyaw background.

The program's manager, Marliiss Taylor, said the high number of indigenous clients is a reflection of bigger issues within the community.

"I think that a lot of mainstream folks still don't appreciate the incredible effects of the residential school system," she said.

"[HER] has a really critical viewpoint on some of the larger historical legacies that make people homeless," Konsmo said

More flexibility than mainstream health care system

HER is a modest operation, with three pregnancy support workers, two registered nurses, and a social worker. It is made up of a small, dimly-lit room filled with secondhand furniture that they call their pregnancy room, as well as another room for nursing.

"It's close to them. It's a little gritty; doesn't feel like a formal doctor's office," she said.

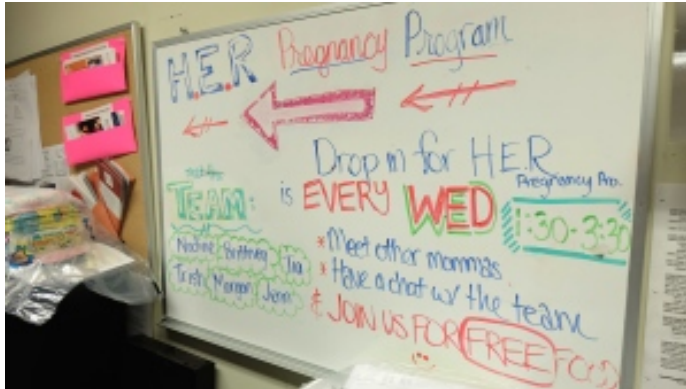
'That fetal heartbeat is much more than just a diagnostic 'how's the baby doing?' It represents hope.' - *Marliiss Taylor, nurse with HER Pregnancy*

HER employees help clients make key decisions early on in the pregnancy and support whatever decision is made. HER will put clients in touch with a Children's Services agent, so that when the baby is born, the agent knows who the mother is and what work they've done to keep their child. In many cases, it means they are less likely to immediately apprehend the child.

The program also approaches prenatal care from a harm-reduction standpoint rather than an abstinence-based one, which can include encouraging women who use drugs and alcohol to use less.

"We have women come in and say 'I need to hear that baby's heartbeat because I feel like using right now.' And that's a control for them," Taylor said.

"That fetal heartbeat is much more than just a diagnostic 'how's the baby doing?' It represents hope."



Homeless and pregnant women can drop by Boyle Street's pregnancy room for everything from advice to providing HER Pregnancy staff with a blood and urine samples. (Nikki Wiart)

HER keeps supporting mothers up to six months after delivery to ensure they're on the right track to being a successful parent.

This dedication is what makes the program different from others offered through Alberta Health Services.

"You can just come and talk to them and they're not like, 'OK, you gotta go. I have another appointment,'" Quinn said.

"They make you feel comfortable and make you feel like they're family."

A feeling Taylor said can make a huge impact on a soon-to-be mom.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/pregnant-aboriginal-women-find-world-of-difference-in-edmonton-inner-city-program-1.3166773>

Sexy Health Includes Knowing Your HIV Status

by [Kelowna Capital News - Kelowna Capital News](#)

posted Jul 27, 2015 at 6:00 AM

Knowing your HIV status is an important part of a healthy sex life and a good relationship.

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is partnering with Interior Health on a campaign that aims to destigmatize HIV and AIDS and encourage all First Nations and Aboriginal peoples, along with all sexually active adults in the region, to get an HIV test.

The partnership between the two health authorities is part of the “My Health Is Sexy” campaign, a public awareness campaign launched by Interior Health on World AIDS Day last year to promote HIV testing. It is estimated that approximately 3,500 people in BC are living with HIV but are unaware of their status. The FNHA supports frequent HIV testing for all First Nations and Aboriginal people in BC to determine their status, and to ensure those living with HIV are engaged with care providers who will help them access and benefit from treatment.

“We are very pleased to partner with FNHA on this phase of the My Health is Sexy campaign. Aboriginal people are disproportionately affected by HIV in many of our communities,” said Dr. Trevor Corneil, Chief Medical Health Officer for Interior Health and Physician Lead for the My Health is Sexy campaign. “By working together with FNHA and our Aboriginal partners we hope to inspire Aboriginal people to be proactive by requesting an HIV test and for those who are living with HIV to achieve wellness through treatment.”

A positive HIV result is not what it used to be. Early diagnosis and treatment of HIV can improve overall health, prevent the transmission of HIV to another person, and is available for all at no cost. Although there is no cure for HIV, there are medications that when taken as prescribed will help people live longer, healthier lives.

“Even if you’re in an established relationship, an HIV test is a good chance to check in with your mate, your doctor and yourself. It should be a routine part of your health care,” said Dr. Evan Adams, Chief Medical Officer with the First Nations Health Authority. “It is important that we start the conversation about HIV. First Nations peoples need to know it is preventable and treatable — it starts with talking about it, getting a test and if necessary accessing treatment.”

The FNHA urges health-care providers to take Indigenous Cultural Competency training as an initial step in beginning to deliver culturally safe health services, and to ensure testing, follow up, and treatment is carried out in an effective way. Efforts by health-care practitioners will help to achieve culturally safe and appropriate routine HIV testing, connection to treatment, and retention in care to offer a higher quality of care for First Nations in BC.

It is equally important that once engaged in care, First Nations and Aboriginal peoples are assisted in addressing the barriers that may prevent them from continuing to remain in

care. Referrals and access to support services can be a key factor as to whether the person continues on treatment and achieves optimal viral load suppression. Research has shown that an early diagnosis in combination with sustained antiretroviral therapy means HIV-positive people can expect to live up to an additional five-and-a-half decades. In addition, sustained treatment can greatly reduce the likelihood of HIV transmission.

The “My Health is Sexy” campaign is a part of the Province’s Seek and Treat for Optimal Prevention of HIV/AIDS (STOP HIV/AIDS) program. Since Interior Health launched the STOP HIV/AIDS program, testing in the region has increased by 32 per cent. Health outreach nurses are available across the Interior Health region to provide discreet and confidential HIV testing by calling 1-866-778-7736.

Information about HIV, testing, and the My Health Is Sexy campaign is available at www.myhealthissexy.com.

HIV and AIDS – Did You Know?

HIV is Preventable:

- Know your HIV status
- Use condoms
- Talk to new partners about HIV prevention
- Get tested during pregnancy
- If you are using injection drugs, use new equipment every time (new needles and syringes)

About Treatment:

- Early treatment improves health
- With treatment, women living with HIV can have healthy babies
- Beginning treatment is a decision an individual makes with their doctor
- Good nutrition, rest, exercise and other stress relievers help build a healthy immune system

Direct Link: <http://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/318587011.html>

Susan Aglukark leads #ArcticRoseWarCry suicide prevention campaign

'We're fighting for our lives,' says the famous singer. 'We are in a battle to save our future'

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 27, 2015 12:40 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 27, 2015 1:56 PM CT



Susan Aglukark launched her #ArcticRoseWarCry campaign last Thursday during a concert at the Pan Am Aboriginal Pavilion in Toronto. She wants action on suicide prevention. (Submitted by Nadya Kwandibens)

Susan Aglukark, one of Nunavut's most recognizable singers, hopes her #ArcticRoseWarCry campaign will show Canada's leaders that the suicide rate among aboriginal youth is a national crisis — and something needs to be done.

"They're in crisis," said Aglukark.

"Everybody hears about it all the time, but what are we really doing about it?"

Aglukark launched the social media campaign during her concert last Thursday at the Aboriginal Pavilion, which ran concurrently during the Pan Am Games in Toronto. She says she chose the "war cry" theme in reference to the First Nations tradition.

"The war cry is this really high-pitched scream, but it's not just a scream," she said.

It's about "announcing the battle" and rallying the troops.



Susan Aglukark's #ArcticRoseWarCry campaign challenges people to raise their voices in support of suicide prevention and inundate leaders with a message to end the crisis. (Submitted by Nadya Kwandibens)

"The hashtag campaign is just to collect supporters and inundate the public and our leaders with, 'We've got to do something now,'" she said.

'We can't keep waiting'

Inuit in Nunavut have long recognized that the numbers of suicide in the territory are of [crisis proportions](#).

In January 2014, Nunavut's coroner announced [she would hold an inquest](#) into the "epidemic" after a record 45 people in the territory took their own lives in 2013 — the highest number ever recorded in Nunavut, population 36,000.

The territory has had a [suicide prevention strategy](#) in place since 2010 and the issue has been the subject of [multiple studies](#).

Aglukark says that's not enough.

"We can't keep waiting for reports and everything like that. We've got to do something now."

The singer, who rose to fame after releasing her "Arctic Rose" album in 1992, says she's been waiting for the perfect time to launch this campaign.

[The Aboriginal Pavilion](#) offered that moment.

"We are in a battle to save our future through our children and our youth," she said.

And the record high rates of suicide may just be a symptom of the many diverse issues facing aboriginal youth in Canada.

"That tells you that our children are calling out for help," she said. "We need to help them now."

Aglukark is planning events for World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.

And she encourages people across Canada to send in their war cries, using the hashtag, before that time.

"When a whole group of people do that together you have to listen," she says.

"Just put your war cry out there. Just make people listen."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/susan-aglukark-leads-arcticrosewarcry-suicide-prevention-campaign-1.3169119>

Ontario Métis face higher cancer risk than non-aboriginal residents: study

Cancer Care Ontario, Métis Nation of Ontario behind release of new data

The Canadian Press Posted: Jul 29, 2015 5:12 PM ET Last Updated: Jul 29, 2015 7:55 PM ET



Little girl in hospital; Shutterstock ID 91995590; Cost Ctr: 9688225; Manager: Brenda Carroll; Email: imageresearchlibrary@cbc.ca; Project: archive (Shutterstock)

New research suggests Métis residents in Ontario face a significantly higher cancer risk than the province's non-aboriginal population.

A joint report from Cancer Care Ontario and the Métis Nation of Ontario outlines the aboriginal group's cancer risk factors such as higher rates of smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity.

For example, the report says nearly half of Métis in their 20s smoke, compared to 27 per cent of non-aboriginal Ontarians.

It says Métis people, who tend to be under-identified or under-represented in indigenous health research, are also less likely to be up to date with cancer screening tests.

Dr. Loraine Marrett, a senior scientist at Cancer Care Ontario, says in a release that the data underlines that the Métis community would benefit from programs framed in their community — and family-centric culture.

The study combined six years of data from Statistics Canada on the lifestyle factors that play the largest role in cancer risk.

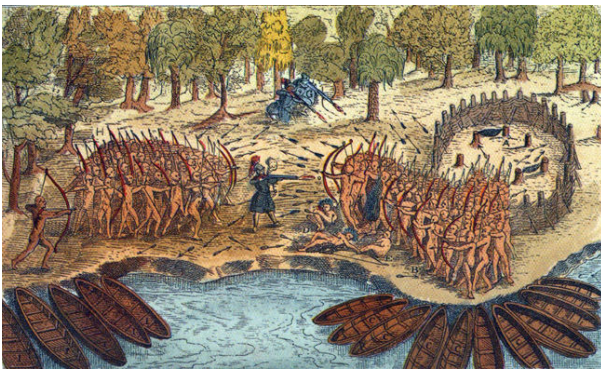
Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-m%C3%A9tis-face-higher-cancer-risk-than-non-aboriginal-residents-study-1.3173055>

Aboriginal History

To the edge of the woods: From petroglyphs to Serpent Mounds, signs of early First Nations presence in Peterborough and area are there

By [Elwood Jones](#)

Saturday, July 25, 2015 7:16:35 EDT AM



*This is the third part of a three-part look at early First Nations in Canada, Ontario and the Peterborough area, much of it drawn from the book *The Edge of the Woods* by Jon Parmenter.*

Jon Parmenter's research thoroughness allows us to identify the shifting territory of the Iroquois in the Trent Severn area. In the years before 1634 he notes three major indigenous exchange routes that crossed Iroquois lands, or were easily reached from Iroquois lands. There was the trade route from the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa River. There was the Hudson-Mohawk-Lake Champlain route. The third route was from the Chesapeake utilizing the Potomac, the Susquehannah and the Delaware River. This helps to clarify why the Iroquois had a wide area of interest.

The area north of Lake Ontario was not particularly significant, although the Trent Severn waterways was important in the 1615 advances to Onondaga.

Between 1634 and 1650, there were no Indian villages north of Lake Ontario, although the area may have been a hunting area for Wendats.

By 1673, he is showing Iroquois villages along the north shore of Lake Ontario, and one site a little further north of the lake. Three of the villages were Ganeraske and Quintio and Quinte, names that are still important to this area.

Parmenter's discussion of population suggests that the strategies to maintain population despite occasional epidemics were successful; the Iroquois population ranged between about 9,000 and 11,000, although dropping to 7,000 during the 1690s. The area of Iroquoia was between 1500 and 2000 square miles until 1664; then it increased to over 7,000 square miles in 1665-1666; after that it was mostly over 30,000 square miles, although exceeding 45,000 square miles between 1667 and 1683.

A major shift in our area occurred in the 1690s by a series of battles between the Mississauga and the Mohawks, the net effect of which was to drive the Iroquois out of what is now Ontario. The battles were along two axes, one through the peninsula of western Ontario and the second through our area, including battles or skirmishes at Nogojiwanong and at Carrying Place. By the 1730s, Mississauga people migrated into this area, the forerunners of First Nations settlements on what became Lake Chemong and Rice Lake.

These books have prompted me to view the local First Nations within a longer time frame. It is now clear that Champlain's visit here in 1615 was part of the bigger picture that was defining the edges of the Iroquois world. As well, his actions were viewed as unwarranted interference in the Iroquois agenda. The Iroquois attacks on the Huron villages in the 1640s, and the Mississauga counterattack of the 1690s were directly related.

When Bruce Dyer and I were speculating about Nogojiwanong in 1987, many places in the Canadian north were being renamed to reflect earlier names used by First Nations.

Frobisher Bay, for example, became Iqaluit. We thought it might be the earliest name applied to the site we now call Peterborough. At the time, we suggested that the park between Peterborough Square and the river might appropriately be renamed Nogojiwanong. The city had named the park, which was created out of the 1974 building of Peterborough Square, in honour of Adam Scott. Scott was our first white settler and his association with Peterborough began in 1819 when he and his associates decided to build a mill at the foot of what became King Street. Their descendants objected to such ideas, of course, but it is appropriate to be true to historical geography when giving names to our parks. When community gardens were added to this park, they were named Nogojiwanong. The Peterborough Historical Society has marked the locale with a modest historical plaque at the north end of Millennium Park.

Nogojiwanong was an Ojibwa word meaning "at the foot of the long rapids." The Ojibwa were properly impressed with the long stretch of water that fell over 110 feet, some two-thirds of the height of Niagara, but in a distance of ten miles. The "place at the top of the rapids," Katchawanooka has survived as the name of the lake we recognize as the gateway to the Kawarthas, "the land of shining water." Nogowjiwanong is rarely encountered. There are many efforts to rescue Anishanabwe geographical names, and it would be great if these were captured on a splendid wall map, such as was done for north-west Michigan. The name was appropriate. Peterborough was started at the head of navigation on the Otonabee River. The famed Indian trail or portage between the Otonabee River began at the foot of Simcoe Street and took an efficient route to Bridgenorth on Lake Chemong. The names have changed, but the relationships still make sense. Nogojiwanong was the place to leave the Otonabee, and take a short cut that avoided a long climb, and a still longer water trip for anyone heading west.

Peterborough was known to the First Nations or Anishanabwe many centuries before the white man arrived. Signs of those earlier movements have survived in the Serpent Mounds, the Petroglyphs and other significant sites, particularly archeological. In Peterborough, a plaque on Brock Street commemorates the site where the remains of an Indian from possibly one thousand years ago were found. The towering white pines dominated the area, and it was used for hunting from an early date.

For their part, the Ojibwa (or Mississauga) who migrated south from their northern reaches by the 1730s had effectively settled the lands from Detroit to Cataraqui (now known as Kingston). Because of these events, the British when they settled Ontario had to make their treaties with the Mississauga or Ojibwa. Even the Iroquois were given lands at Deseronto and the Six Nations Reserve after the American Revolution as a result of a British treaty with the Ojibwa. The treaties in this area were signed in 1818 and within months the first whites settled in this area. In 1818, Samuel Wilmot, the surveyor, recommended that Nogojiwanong would be a potential town site.

Jon Parmenter notes that the Iroquois negotiated treaties in 1701 with both New France and New York. This was possible because of the significant freedom of movement that the Iroquois had developed. They could guarantee trade, for example, with all the area controlled by the League. They could also facilitate arrangements beyond their borders

by acting as intermediaries. The arrangements included an exchange of prisoners and a hunting agreement. The Iroquois communities in the St. Lawrence confirmed the continuity with 1534; it also confirmed acceptance of the subsequent expansion by the Iroquois into the pays d'en haut.

Parmenter argues, "The Iroquois treaties of 1701 with New France and New York arose not from a context of Iroquois defeat, crisis or weakness after the mid-1690s, but rather from more than half a century of League efforts to establish Iroquoia as a crucial, central space between French and Anglo-American settler populations on the periphery of their homelands". these two treaties resolved a number of social, political, economic and spatial issues generated by patterns of Iroquois mobility after 1534." (271)

Parmenter concludes, "Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iroquois movements to the north shore of Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River valley, the Virginia and Maryland backcountry, and the upper Great Lakes region had provided Iroquois people with access to still more distant regions for diverse social, economic and political purposes." (273)

Parmenter's *The Edge of the Woods* is compelling both in its arguments and in its methods. By paying close attention to all the available historical documentation, he makes sense of the world of Iroquoia, and its survival strategies in the face of global changes.

Elwood H. Jones, archivist, Trent Valley Archives, 567 Carnegie Avenue, Peterborough can be reached at elwood@trentvalleyarchives.com

Direct Link: <http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2015/07/25/to-the-edge-of-the-woods-local-history-from-petroglyphs-to-serpent-mounds-signs-of-early-first-nations-presence-in-peterborough-and-area-are-there-one-plan>

First Nations people called Credit River the trusting creek



Heritage Mississauga has released a new video called the Majestic Credit River that looks at the waterway's history.

Mississauga News

By [Chris Clay](#)

21 hours ago

MISSISSAUGA — Heritage Mississauga has just released a new video that celebrates the history of the city's most iconic river.

The short video, dubbed the *Majestic Credit River*, presents a look at the river from 10,000 years ago to today.

The video features a number of interesting facts about its role in the trading relationship between the First Nations and European people. The Ojibwa, for instance, called the river Missinnihe, which translates to trusting creek.

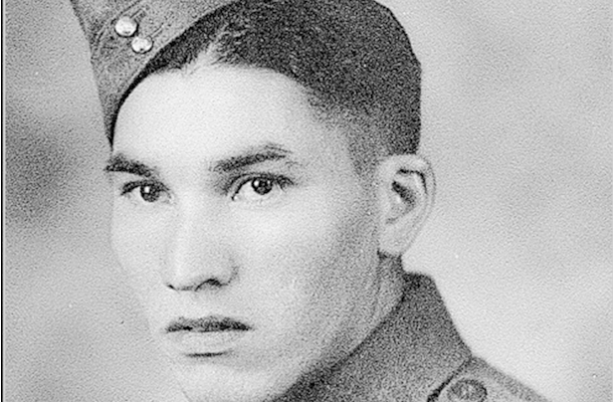
It also features shots of some of the most picturesque spots along the river as well as people enjoying all it has to offer through recreation activities such as fishing or swimming.

The video was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help the foundation promote Mississauga's heritage.

Direct Link: <http://www.mississauga.com/community-story/5764477-first-nations-people-called-credit-river-the-trusting-creek/>

Documentary honours secret Cree code talkers of Second World War

By Lloyd Wipf, Edmonton Journal July 30, 2015



Charles "Checker" Tomkins

In war, anything can be seen as a weapon, including language.

For Charles "Checker" Tomkins, a Cree soldier from Grouard, Alta., fighting in the Second World War, his language was just that, a weapon that the enemy could never destroy unless they killed him.

Charles was a code talker — a practice of using obscure languages to transmit coded messages during wartime. Messages were translated to Cree and other native languages so they could not be read if they were intercepted by the enemy. When the messages were delivered to their intended recipient, other Crees would translate the words back into English for military officials. The Cree language was chosen because of its accuracy in translation.

The code talkers were sworn to secrecy, so Charles never talked about it. The program was declassified in 1963 with little government fanfare and most of the code talkers took their secret with them to the grave — their contributions never honoured, never recognized.

Alex Lazarowich, Charles' niece and a documentary film producer also from Grouard, hopes to change that. She's working with director Cowboy Smithx to create a 10-minute documentary that explores the power of language, focusing mostly on Charles and a few other code talkers from Alberta and Saskatchewan, all of whom have died.

"I think it's important to highlight the Cree language and the role it played in winning the war," says Lazarowich. "I'm Cree myself and I think that (the documentary) will be a great way to inspire youth to learn more about their heritage and language, and be proud of it."

It's ironic that these men were forced to go to residential schools where they were not permitted to speak their language, she says, yet when war broke out that language played a crucial role in defeating the enemy.

“It is inspiring to our community that our language was used as a weapon and that these men fought for our freedom,” she says. “It is time that we honour these aboriginal veterans; too many of them were overlooked.”

Lazarowich was approached by Charles’ brothers to make the documentary.

It wasn’t until 1992 that Charles first talked about his experience with his brother Jimmy Tomkins, after they had watched the Hollywood film Windtalkers, about Navajo code talkers enlisted by the American military for the war in the Pacific.

“I had no idea that he had been involved with code talking,” says Jimmy. “After we saw that movie and he started talking about it, that was the first time that I had ever heard anything about it.”

Charles joined the military to escape the crushing realities of the Great Depression, but he also wanted to serve his country. He loved Canada and was proud to fight as a Canadian citizen, says Jimmy.

“I hope they get some recognition out of this (documentary),” he says. “They deserve it. They were never really in too much danger, they were mainly in bunkers, but they still deserve to have their contributions recognized.”

Charles did receive a letter of recognition — not specifically about his code work — from Veterans Affairs in 2002 shortly before he died. He also received six medals for his service during the Second World War — the 1939-1945 Star; the France and Germany Star; the Defence Medal, given to all Canadians who served for six months in Britain between 1939-1945; the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, given to all who served 18 months during the Second World War; and the War Medal 1939-1945.

The documentary is being funded by the National Screen Institute of Canada as part of the Aboriginal Documentary Training Course. Four producer-director teams are chosen annually from a pool of 20 or 30 applicants to take part in the year-long production of a documentary short to be featured at national and international film festivals. Lazarowich and Smithx received more funding when they won first place and \$30,000 at the Hot Docs BravoFactual short pitch competition in May. They were among six Canadian filmmakers who pitched their short documentary project to a live audience and panel of judges.

The documentary will be broadcast on Bravo and APTN.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Documentary+honours+secret+Cree+code+talkers+Secord+World/11254835/story.html>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Canada's largest reserve Six Nations hosts first-ever Pride parade

By [Aviva West](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – Fri, 24 Jul, 2015



Six Nations is holding the country's first-ever on-reserve Pride parade on Saturday.

[Six Nations of the Grand River](#), the largest and most populous First Nations reserve in Canada, is hosting the first-ever on-reserve [Pride parade](#) this weekend.

[Located about 110 kilometres southwest of Toronto](#), Six Nations comprises 25,660 members, some 12,271 of whom live on reserve. It is famous for being the only reserve in North America to have all six Iroquois nations — Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora — living together.

The plan for a Pride march was born after a conversation between band member Myka Burning and her young daughter about the oppression faced by people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. Burning, who wasn't immediately available to comment, was inspired to create the event after her daughter asked her if there were indigenous people who were also LGBTQ.

"I said, 'Of course!'" [Burning told the Two Row Times](#). "And she said 'Why don't we have a Pride parade on the reserve to show Indians we care about them!' And voila — the seed was planted and we just put it out there to see if the community was interested. And boy were they!"

Burning used Facebook to reach out for help and eventually an informal committee was formed. Upon hearing that a Pride **march** was being planned, the response from the community was overwhelmingly positive. [Posting on Facebook](#), Burning wrote "I have received so much good feedback and support it's remarkable."

[Six Nations Pride](#) begins Saturday at 11 a.m. at Veteran's Park in the village of [Ohsweken](#) and will include speakers, singers and drummers, all culminating in a march. Among the speakers planned are two-spirited men and women and the mother of a child who was forced to move off-reserve as a result of harassment.

So far, more than 225 people have said they plan to attend. Burning told the Two Row Times, “We have people coming from up north in the Sault, Kettle Point, Toronto, Niagara, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, London and Peterborough. The general consensus is people have been dreaming about this and waiting for this.”

Despite the positive response, for some Six Nations still carries a reputation as an unsafe place for LGBTQ people. Burning is trying hard to change that.

“Our indigenous communities are filled with wonderful, fabulous and important two-spirited, trans, bi etc people,” she wrote on the Facebook page. “It’s time to come together and celebrate and honour our sons, cousins, sisters, parents, neighbours and show them that they are loved and accepted in our communities.”

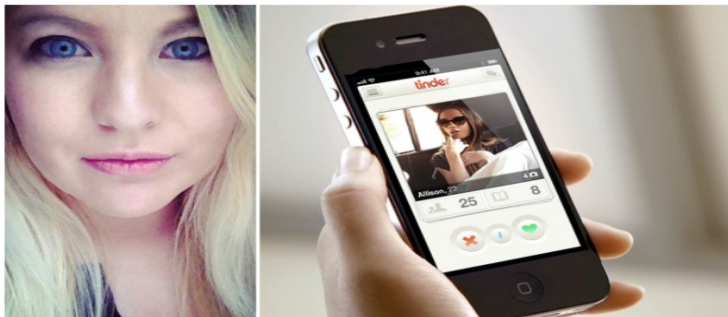
[Two-spirited](#) (derived from the Anishinaabemowin niizh manidoowag meaning two spirits) is an English term used to represent the many LGBTQ indigenous identities that existed prior to European arrival. It has been used historically to represent a person with both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and today it is used by some First Nations people to describe their sexuality, gender or spiritual identity.

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/canadas-largest-reserve-hosts-first-ever-pride-190009581.html>

First Nations woman exposes Tinder racism on Twitter

Jessica Deer says she started #StWhiteGuysTellMe to help other aboriginal youth dealing with racism**

By Daybreak North, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 27, 2015 2:00 PM PT Last Updated: Jul 27, 2015 2:00 PM PT



Jessica Deer says she has to defend her Mohawk identity on Tinder because her looks don't match First Nations stereotypes. (Twitter/Tinder)

A Mohawk woman started a Twitter hashtag, [#S**tWhiteGuysTellMe](#), to expose the racist comments she was receiving on the dating app Tinder.

Jessica Deer, 25, is from the small community of Kahnawake, just outside of Montreal, and describes herself as blonde, blue-eyed, and pale skinned. She uses her Kahnawake name on Tinder, which sometimes prompts unwanted attention.

She says people would try to make her First Nations identity into something exotic, or make references to their love for Pocahontas.

"Those are issues that a lot of other people who are single and indigenous are facing," she said.

In some instances, suitors don't believe Deer is First Nations at all. Deer says she often has to defend her identity because her looks don't match First Nations stereotypes.

"I think it's just really a constant hassle to have to constantly explain my identity and defending my own identity when people don't believe me," she said.

"If I'm saying I am, please stop questioning it."

Deer says she started the hashtag to vent her own frustrations, but also to create a sense of solidarity among those who experience racism in the dating world.

She says aboriginal youth grow up dealing with issues of not only identity but dating as well, and that the combination of the two can prove to be a struggle.

"For me it was an issue of wanting to make sure that other youth or other young people going through this...like you're not alone," she said.

Advice dealing with Tinder racism

Deer suggests engaging in a friendly conversation with the offender to explain why certain comments are not acceptable.

If that doesn't work, Deer says to not dwell on the issue.

"Just un-match and move on," she said. "There's more fish in the sea."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-woman-exposes-tinder-racism-on-twitter-1.3169538>

'Salish' names for new BC Ferries honour aboriginal heritage



BC Ferries announced the names of three planned new vessels Tuesday.

by [Jeff Nagel - BC Local News](#)

posted Jul 28, 2015 at 10:00 AM— updated Jul 28, 2015 at 12:34 PM

Three new BC Ferries vessels that start arriving next year will bear the names Salish Orca, Salish Raven and Salish Eagle.

The names announced Tuesday in Victoria honour the aboriginal heritage of the Coast Salish people and the Salish Sea through which the vessels will sail.

The Salish Orca is to begin service in late 2016 on the Comox-Powell River run, while the Salish Eagle and Salish Raven begin carrying passengers in early- to mid-2017 on the Southern Gulf Islands route.

The three intermediate class vessels replace the Queen of Nanaimo and the Queen of Burnaby, which began service in the mid-1960s.

The new ferries are being built in Poland by Remontowa Shipbuilding at a cost of \$165 million.

They'll be the first dual-fuel ferries in the fleet, able to run on either liquefied natural gas or diesel for propulsion and power generation.

Coast Salish artisans will design artwork for the exterior and interior of the vessels to showcase aboriginal culture.

The names were chosen as part of a contest that drew more than 7,000 entries, along with [satirical ones](#) that lampooned BC Ferries' challenges on social media.

Direct Link: <http://www.surreyleader.com/news/318929211.html>

Aboriginal Politics

U.N. Human Rights Body Blasts Canada's Lack of Progress on Indigenous Peoples

[ICTMN Staff](#)

7/24/15

Indigenous and human rights leaders in Canada welcomed the validation contained in the latest report from the United Nations Human Rights Committee as it addressed the prevalence of violence against aboriginal women, the uneven resources devoted to children in the social welfare system, and excessive uses of force in land disputes, among other issues of major concern.

“Today’s report shows that we need action now on our collective agenda for closing the human rights gap,” said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde in a statement on July 23, when the report was issued. “It is significant that a report on human rights in Canada focuses so much on Indigenous Peoples and indigenous rights. This speaks to the extent of our challenges and the urgent need to address them. The report is yet another call to action for Canada to work with First Nations as partners to realize our human rights, including our Aboriginal and Treaty rights.”

More than 26 human rights organizations, including Canada Without Poverty, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Amnesty International Canada and Human Rights Watch, submitted statements and supporting documents to the 18-member U.N. Human Rights Committee for review under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which met from June 29 through July 24. It handed down more than a dozen recommendations, including that a national inquiry be conducted into the matter of missing and murdered indigenous women.

The committee recently conducted a periodic review of Canada and six other countries during its four-week session. Its examination found Canada wanting on a number of fronts related to civil and political freedoms, much of it regarding Indigenous Peoples. . The review, conducted every 10 years, was the first one under the seven-year-old government of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The committee revisited and reiterated many other groups’ calls for a national inquiry into the unsolved cases of nearly 1,200—and growing daily—missing and murdered indigenous women, a statistic compiled by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). It also spoke of the need for Canada to focus more on overall prevalence of violence against Native women.

“The Committee is concerned that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately affected by life-threatening forms of violence, homicides and disappearances,” the committee said in its seven-page report, [Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Canada](#). “Notably, the Committee is concerned about the [Canadian government’s] reported failure to provide adequate and effective responses to this issue.”

On the upside were British Columbia's Missing Women Commission of Inquiry and recently passed legislation related to missing persons; the federal government's new Action Plan to Address Family Violence and Violent Crimes Against Aboriginal Women and Girls. But the committee said it was still "concerned about the lack of information on measures taken to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible."

Recommendations were manifold: "The State party should, as a matter of priority: a) address the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls by conducting a national inquiry, as called for by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, in consultation with indigenous women's organizations and families of the victims; b) review its legislation at the federal, provincial and territorial levels and coordinate police responses across the country with a view to preventing the occurrence of such murders and disappearances; c) investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators and provide reparation to victims and; d) address the root causes of violence against indigenous women and girls."

The committee also urged Canada to make a better effort to "promptly and impartially" investigate allegations of ill-treatment and excessive force by police and ensure "that those responsible for such violations are prosecuted and punished with appropriate penalties," citing in particular "indigenous land-related protests," as well as G20 protests in 2010 and student protests in Quebec in 2012.

Preserving the more than 60 indigenous languages still alive across Canada, removing the components of the Indian Act that strip Native women and their descendants of their status if they marry outside an indigenous tribe (it does not happen to men), and addressing the disproportionate incarceration rate of indigenous people compared to the mainstream were also on the list of recommendations. It also expressed reservations with a new anti-terror bill that took effect in June, which indigenous leaders say could infringe on Native rights.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/24/un-human-rights-body-blasts-canadas-lack-progress-indigenous-peoples-161183>

Cuthand: Conservatives treat First Nations as disposable

By Doug Cuthand, The Starphoenix July 24, 2015



Doug Cuthand

This summer's annual meeting of the Assembly of First Nations saw a change, with leaders speaking out against the Conservative government.

"We've had nine years of a Tory government that has done nothing positive for our people," said Ghislain Picard, the AFN regional chief for Quebec. Chief Pat Madabhee from Ontario put it more succinctly: "We've got to get rid of these Conservatives."

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde wisely remained neutral. His is not a partisan position and the office holder must work with all governments on behalf of First Nations people.

But how did things get so bad for First Nations? The Harper government runs an administration that is all politics, all the time. The result has been a lack of solutions, with friends rewarded and enemies targeted.

It has become a world of black and white. This is becoming painfully obvious as we enter a federal election. Our leaders are ignored by the Conservatives, and there are no policies that apply directly to the First Nations.

There are two reasons for this. First, they point to low voter turnout among the First Nations people. And when we do vote, we won't vote Conservative. We are not a supportive constituency and therefore of little use to them politically.

The results of this appeared as soon as they took office. They quickly killed the Kelowna accord, which had been negotiated with the Liberal government, the Assembly of First Nations and the provinces. After that, there were no serious funding increases for basic First Nations programming.

Instead, the government continued to apply the two per cent cap on increases to our funding, which didn't keep up with inflation and population growth.

The famous apology for residential schools and cash compensation had been pushed by First Nations individuals who had survived the dreaded institutions. A subsequent court case had the government on the ropes. The die was cast, so an apology and cash compensation were necessary. The second reason that we have meant too little to the

Harper government is the wedge politics and politics of division that have been its hallmark.

The old Reform Party of Canada discovered that racism draws votes. There is a strong anti-Indian sentiment across the Prairies, and it became a useful tool to pander to the Conservative base. The government's First Nations Transparency Act that revealed the salaries and expenses of the chiefs and councillors was a piece of legislation aimed at the Conservative base and not First Nations citizens, as spun by the government.

When confronted by the appalling situation in Attawapiskat, Prime Minister Stephen Harper dismissed it by stating that he gave them \$50 million. What he didn't clarify was that the money was for a community of 2,000 over a five-year period, and included the costs of providing education, health and all other necessary community programming. It was a cheap shot that again appealed to the far-right political base.

Even the Harper government realized that it couldn't continue to attack First Nations and aboriginal people by itself so it turned to Patrick Brazeau.

Brazeau was head of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, a small national splinter group. He had come out in support of the Conservative party and made disparaging remarks about the AFN and other aboriginal groups. He was seen as the perfect candidate for a seat in the Senate, which provided a safe perch from where he could continue to snipe at mainstream aboriginal organizations.

He was able to say things that no non-aboriginal could get away with. But Brazeau was quickly thrown under the bus when he became a liability.

Canada's Constitution recognizes treaty and aboriginal rights and self-government as an aboriginal right. Under the Conservatives we have not seen this right recognized.

The ill-fated Education Act is an example. The government failed to properly consult and negotiate, but instead co-opted the head of the AFN, Shawn Atleo. Isolated and under pressure, Atleo accepted the legislation, which upon closer examination turned out to be backward and colonial. The government's hook was that there would be new funding.

The funding announcement, made by Harper on the Blood reserve in southern Alberta, called for increased education funding starting in 2016 and spread over seven years. It looked great on the surface but was tied to the acceptance of the unpopular legislation. It was all smoke and mirrors, and an insult to our intelligence.

The Harper government has isolated First Nations and defined us as the authors of our own misfortune. It has ignored Supreme Court decisions and refused calls for parity for education and child welfare funding. Even the calls for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women have fallen on deaf ears in Ottawa.

It has become very clear that the Harper government considers us the people it can afford to throw away. It's a sad commentary on a nation and its government when an entire group is singled out to receive inferior treatment.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Cuthand+Conservatives+treat+First+Nations+disposable/11239101/story.html>

Opinion: Aboriginal voters will make up their own minds

By Mark Milke, The Leader-Post July 27, 2015

One curious side-effect of modern identity politics - the regressive notion that your skin colour, ethnicity or gender determines your priorities, privileges and politics - is how it leads leaders to assumptions that they "own" others or, at least, can speak for them based on some shared, but irrelevant, characteristic.

Enter Perry Bellegarde, grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the taxpayer-funded federal lobby group that represents many reserve chiefs.

With an eye on the upcoming federal election and the possible effect of native votes on the outcome, Bellegarde recently observed: "Fiftyone ridings can make a difference between a majority and a minority government."

Ghislain Picard, a regional AFN chief, was more explicit about whom senior AFN leaders would like to see elected.

"I don't see how we can go another four years with this government."

The AFN antipathy to the Harper Tories originates in the reflexive belief that what some aboriginal politicians demand - more taxpayer cash, unthinking agreement with the AFN's take on everything, and any other whim or wish - must be unquestionably accepted and certainly never opposed.

Except the present government delivers taxpayer money and also privileges to aboriginal Canadians in much the same way as have previous federal governments. Some funding for some aboriginal Canadians - status "Indians" in the old, official constitutional and treaty language - must occur because of constitutional and treaty imperatives. So that hasn't changed, nor should it.

It's possible to tinker with other items. Some tax dollars, such as those for exclusive Health Canada benefits for some Inuit and First Nations people, or privileges, such as

most tax-free exemptions on reserves, result from policy preferences and Indian Act legislation respectively. But even here the Tories have been status quo.

The Conservatives did pass a law to give women on reserves matrimonial property rights; this properly gives them the same rights as all other women.

The Tories also passed a law to require public disclosure of the political salaries of chiefs and other reserve politicians. That's long been standard practice for municipal, provincial and federal politicians.

Such recent legislation can be an irritant only to those who harvest salaries and benefits above what is reasonable or who think women on reserves belong to men. That brings us back to identity politics and its roots in collectivist assumptions.

Collectivists presume a right to control others based on some similar characteristic and/or a desire to protect their own collective. Extreme historical examples include slavery - white American southerners (wrongly) assumed their unique southern culture should be left undisturbed by the rights of individual blacks.

Modern collectivists and practitioners of identity politics aim for milder control and influence of others, but the assumption of groupthink and "us" and "them" persists. When aboriginal politicians call on 1,400,685 people who self-identify as aboriginal to mark their ballot for anyone but the Conservatives, that assumes all such individuals think only in that category.

But as with other Canadians - those who tick off English, French, German, East Indian, Chinese or any other such census form possibility - such identification hardly means one's background, ethnicity or race is the primary determinant of one's identity.

Instead, one can think in other categories: Mother, father, feminist, free enterpriser, business owner, Quebec sovereigntist, Newfoundlander, conservative, gay, straight, liberal, progressive, atheist, religious, a union member, environmentalist, student, urban, rural, or even off-reserve and on-reserve native.

And of course, most people cobble together an identity and priorities from a combination of many such possibilities.

Think on that and the AFN anti-Conservative appeal not only assumes a hard-shell, collective "we," but also a lack of individual cognition and will. It assumes 1.4 million people all think the same way and value the same political goods.

The assumption rather forgets every person has their own heart and head.

Mark Milke is a Calgary author and columnist. This column first appeared in the Calgary Herald.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/news/Opinion+Aboriginal+voters+will+make+their+minds/11245038/story.html>

Will federal election result in reconciliation, or colonialism-as-usual?

Sunday, July 26, 2015 by: Maurice Switzer

**By Catherine Murton Stoehr
and Maurice Switzer**

On Oct. 19 Canadians will elect a new federal government, and on that day they will decide whether or not they will be Idle No More.

Successive governments have commissioned numerous reports, supposedly with the intention of reframing the relationship and closing socio-economic gaps between First Peoples and settler Canadians. Millions of pages and hundreds of recommendations later the Canadian public is collectively asking itself "Why are things still so bad?"

The Liberal government's 1996 response to the 440 recommendations of the landmark report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was called "Gathering Strength", but was soon dubbed "Gathering Dust" after it became clear that there was little political appetite to put action to the five-year study.

This past spring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission produced its report – this time commissioned by a Conservative government – that was twice as long as RCAP, cost more – about \$70 million – and produced 94 recommendations to improve Canada's tattered relationship with First Peoples. The Harper caucus has greeted the report with virtual silence, despite comments by such respected Canadians as Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin that the TRC report confirms that her country has committed cultural genocide against indigenous peoples.

It seems that the more evidence that is produced to demonstrate federal failures to honour treaty and aboriginal rights, the more evasive successive governments have been in shirking their constitutional obligations. Meanwhile, Canada's citizens are miles ahead of their politicians in seeking justice and reform. They have joined their indigenous relatives in round dances across the country, lending their support to First Peoples who say they will be Idle No More in the face of ongoing injustices.

Every university in the country has now adopted a policy on improving education for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students. Some provincial school systems and post-secondary institutions are requiring all students to participate in Indigenous Studies.

Canadians need to know that the likelihood of Indian residential school students dying was greater than that for Canadian troops who participated in World War II.

But, instead of leading the charge to improve life for First Peoples, federal political parties have been missing in action.

Some examples:

Conservatives: On June 11, 2008 Stephen Harper issued a nationally-televised apology for the crimes committed against Native children in the notorious network of government-sanctioned residential schools. He said there was no room in Canada for the attitudes which spawned such devastating social experiments. Since then he has closed 134 drug treatment centres for First Peoples, ignored widespread calls to conduct a public inquiry into the disappearances and deaths of 2,000 Indigenous women in the past 30 years, and created policies that would make it more difficult for First Peoples to vote.

On Harper's watch, children like Shannon Koostachin, who traveled to Ottawa to ask for a school in her James Bay community, are sent home empty-handed; Indigenous leaders like Cindy Blackstock are targeted for harassment when they ask why Ottawa provides 22 per cent less funding for First Nations child welfare agencies than provinces provide for Children's Aid Societies; and over 100 First Nations communities live with permanent boil water advisories.

Adding insult to injury, the most recent auditor-general's report revealed that the Conservative government withheld over one billion dollars of taxpayers' money that had been earmarked for First Peoples. And the prime minister boycotted this month's Council of the Federation meeting in St. John's, where provincial premiers discussed priority issues with First Nations leaders.

Liberals: Former Prime Minister Paul Martin has been a fierce critic of Mr. Harper's treatment of First Peoples. He is particularly outspoken on the issue of underfunding of First Nations education and has set up his own education charity. Current Liberal Party Leader, and would-be prime minister Justin Trudeau, has said that "the constitutionally-guaranteed rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada are not an inconvenience but rather a sacred obligation central to what Canada is as a nation."

However neither of these men has acknowledged that it was Paul Martin's Liberal government which capped annual increases to First Nations education budgets at 2%. That arbitrary 20-year restriction is responsible for a huge gap between the funding available to enable First Nations schools to hire the best teachers -- or equip their schools with computers, libraries, or lab equipment -- and the budgets enjoyed by provincial schools.

New Democrats: It remains to be seen if the pledges made by NDP leader Thomas Mulcair to place Indigenous issues at the top of his party's political agenda would translate into action if the polls are correct and he forms the next federal government Oct. 19. Mulcair's participation in the TRC meetings was more than pro forma and caucus members Romeo Saganash, Charlie Angus, and Niki Ashton have effectively used Question Period to give FNMI issues high profile on the floor of the House of Commons.

Both the Liberals and the NDP have pledged that, if elected to power, they will align national policies with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – a powerful statement of principles that the Harper Conservatives officially endorsed but have since dismissed as an “aspirational” document. It is significant that Alberta's newly-elected NDP Premier Rachel Notley has instructed her cabinet ministers to respect UNDRIP principles in the operation of their departments.

This Oct. 19 First Peoples will learn whether they can finally expect Canada to match its words with actions. Countless promises made in treaties have been broken, and expectations raised by apologies from prime ministers and hundreds of recommendations in reports like RCAP, the TRC, and the Ipperwash Inquiry into the death of Anthony Dudley George have been dashed by decades of self-imposed government paralysis.

With a federal election on the horizon, the hustings are swarming with candidates and abuzz with more promises for a better future. From a First Nations perspective, the candidates in those 338 ridings will determine if Canada will finally begin its journey towards genuine reconciliation, or carry on with colonialism-as-usual. Observers note that First Nations residents – who traditionally have a 20-per-cent lower participation rate in federal elections than other voters – could determine the outcomes in as many as 51 of those ridings across the country.

Regardless, it is not too much to ask each and every candidate in every federal riding to identify just one of the 94 recommendations from the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that they are willing to champion in Parliament if elected.

Among their more pressing legislative responsibilities, the MPs elected by Canadians on Oct. 19 will be laying plans to celebrate the country's 150th birthday party in 2017.

For Canada's sake, it is hoped they understand that 148 years of speeches by their predecessors have not produced the opportunity for reconciliation with First Peoples that now presents itself.

Catherine Murton Stoehr is a historian who has taught at Nipissing and Simon Fraser universities.

Maurice Switzer is a citizen of the Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation who has served as communications director for the Assembly of First Nations and the Union of Ontario Indians.

Direct Link: <http://www.baytoday.ca/content/editorials/details.asp?c=81898>

Washaw Sibi re-elects Pauline Trapper-Hester as Chief

Trapper-Hester elected for second term, will work to build new community village within James Bay territory

By Christopher Herodier, Jaime Little, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 28, 2015 2:25 PM CT Last Updated: Jul 28, 2015 2:26 PM CT



Washaw Sibi Chief Pauline Trapper-Hester has been re-elected for a second term. (Pauline Trapper Hester)

The Cree of Washaw Sibi in Quebec re-elected Pauline Trapper-Hester Monday for a second term as Chief.

One of Trapper-Hester's biggest challenges [will be to push forward with plans to build a new village within the James Bay territory for her 500 members](#), who have been scattered for decades in non-Cree communities including the predominantly francophone town of Amos and the nearby Anishnaabe reserve of Pikogan.

"Our advisor informed us that the Cree Nation Government will be signing off on some governance issues," said Trapper-Hester. "I believe the monies may become available soon to start building our own community."

The Washaw Sibi Crees are beneficiaries of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement but do not live within the set boundaries of the territory. They are scattered after being sent to different residential schools, and seeking work in towns and mines in the Abitibi region. Negotiations between Washaw Sibi leaders, the Cree Nation Government and the federal and provincial governments have gone on for more than twelve years.

Earlier this week, Washaw Sibi announced that it's one step closer to breaking ground on the new village. A Facebook post on the Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi's page reads, in part: "BREAKING NEWS!! We may be in a position very soon to secure the funds

required to construct our new village. THIS IS VERY GOOD NEWS FOR WASHAW SIBI PEOPLE!!"

Washaw Sibi is the 10th Cree community in Quebec.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/washaw-sibi-re-elects-pauline-trapper-hester-as-chief-1.3171483>

Aboriginal Affairs Minister's Swipe At Trudeau, Mulcair 'Totally Inappropriate': MP

Posted: 07/28/2015 6:28 pm EDT Updated: 07/29/2015 8:59 am EDT

[Zi-Ann Lum](#)



Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett says it's "totally inappropriate" for Canada's aboriginal affairs minister to take political pot shots when talking about the First Nation Financial Transparency Act.

Bernard Valcourt issued a written statement Tuesday pledging to take action against bands that do not comply with the controversial piece of legislation. In it, he squeezed in a dig at the Liberals.

"It is shameful that Liberal leader Justin Trudeau said [he would scrap this law](#) and deny these members the right to access basic information about their community finances, a right that is awarded to every other Canadian," he said.

"It's just totally inappropriate for a minister to be playing partisan politics on something this important," Bennett told The Huffington Post Canada in an interview.

She called the FNFTA a "misguided" piece of legislation.

“The problem right now is this government’s relationship with First Nations has never been lower and it is time that they rebuild the trust in this frayed relationship with First Nations and not go slamming the leaders of other parties,” she said.

First Nations face sanctions if they fail to report their finances online by midnight Wednesday, according to the Aboriginal Affairs ministry.

The transparency rules, which became law last year, require bands to post their financial statements, revealing the expenses and salaries of chiefs and councillors.

But after two [120-day extensions last year](#), the government is now taking a hardline approach, telling bands it’s time to hand over documents.

“No additional extension will be provided before these measures are applied. I have directed that the sanctions not target essential services that support First Nations measures,” Valcourt said.

In the law’s first year, 98 per cent of bands complied. Communities that don’t meet the deadline face the threat of having their non-essential services funding withheld.

Swipe At The NDP

On top of his dig at the Liberals, Valcourt also squeezed in a swipe at the NDP — a party currently leading [multiple public opinion polls](#).

“Similar to the Liberal leader, NDP leader Thomas Mulcair has shown his party does not believe they need to be accountable to taxpayers by refusing to pay back the \$2.7 million of taxpayer dollars they owe for use of their satellite offices outside Ottawa,” he said.

He added Canadians should expect transparency and accountability from their governments.

Valcourt’s statement follows a story from CBC News Monday that said [eight First Nations are being taken to court](#) by the federal government in an effort to force their compliance to the act.

The NDP’s Niki Ashton called the FNFTA the “wrong way” for the government to achieve accountability.

“For a minister that has already withheld \$1 billion in promised spending from First Nations, it’s staggering that he would now threaten to withhold further funding that will impact people living on reserve,” she said in an email to HuffPost.

Critics have condemned the controversial piece of legislation for being pushed through without prior consultation with First Nations.

“The coercion of the state on this matter is an atrocity,” Saskatchewan’s [Thunderchild First Nation](#) explained in a backgrounder about the law last year. “The Act does not improve the capacity of our nations to assume control over our own affairs.

“By focusing only on the expenditures of the nations, the legislation sidesteps larger systemic issues of funding and responsibility for those issues,” it read.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/07/28/first-nations-financial-transparency-conservatives_n_7890774.html

Consultation, quality of life issues dominate aboriginal minister’s visit

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Wednesday, July 29, 2015 6:04:55 MDT PM



Kathleen Ganley, minister for aboriginal relations and justice, poses with Metis leaders from Fort McMurray, Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan and Conklin following a meeting in Fort McMurray, Alta. on July 28, 2015. Supplied Image

Less than three months after the provincial election, Kathleen Ganley, the new aboriginal relations and justice minister, has been scrambling to repair the previous government’s “rocky” relationship with Alberta’s First Nation and Metis communities.

During a two-day tour of Wood Buffalo, Ganley asked aboriginal leaders how the government could move past their adversarial relationship. The issue of resource consultation was frequently brought up and will likely take years to fix, but many were concerned about the quality of day-to-day life.

“Consultation consisted of the government doing something, then telling people ‘This is what we’re doing.’ That’s not a very useful way to consult,” she said. “We’re going to consult on what the consultation policy should look like going forward. If we don’t ask people how they want to be spoken with, we’ll always have problems.”

But the leaders also wanted more educational and economic opportunities. They wanted improved healthcare and more access to specialists.

“It’s the same you would hear from every Albertan,” she said. “They want their family to be healthy and safe.”

There were also complaints from Metis leaders that, in many cases, energy companies were not legally obligated to meet with them. Just like with their First Nation counterparts, consultation grievances and bad publicity from Metis leaders have led to dozens of lawsuits, legislative challenges, stalled negotiations and protests. Every First Nation in the oilsands has left the Joint Oil Sands Monitoring Program.

“It’s hard to heal from there. We found that out with Shell, even though Shell admitted a Metis consultation policy would have been helpful,” said McMurray Metis vice president Bill Loutitt, referencing Shell’s Jackpine expansion.

Ganley, a former labour lawyer from Calgary, met with Metis and First Nation leaders on Monday, ending the day with a boat tour of the Peace-Athabasca Delta with Mikisew Cree Chief Steve Courtoreille. On Tuesday, she met Metis leaders from Wood Buffalo’s rural hamlets. She also toured Fort McKay and visited Moose Lake with Chief Jim Boucher of the Fort McKay First Nation.

Ganley has inherited one portfolio that must handle the legacy of residential schools and complaints about the quality of resource consultation. In the oilsands, those complaints include land-use planning, environmental monitoring, the pace of industrial development, and the myriad health concerns frequently raised by environmentalists and people living downstream from oil projects.

The isolation of many aboriginal communities brings an extra challenge to creating basic social services designed to combat poverty, and improve health and education.

“Extending an olive branch is one thing, but if you’re talking about a relationship that historically has been very rocky, you need to do a little more than that to establish trust,” she said.

Wildrose leader Brian Jean, who represents the riding holding most of Wood Buffalo’s aboriginal communities, and Wildrose aboriginal affairs critic Dave Hanson were not available for comment.

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/07/29/consultation-quality-of-life-issues-dominate-aboriginal-ministers-visit>

Aboriginal Relations minister vows repeal of controversial consultation bill

[Darcy Henton, Calgary Herald](#)

Published on: July 29, 2015 | Last Updated: July 29, 2015 7:40 PM MDT



Aboriginal Relations minister Kathleen Ganley is vowing to repeal a controversial consultation bill. Gavin Young / Calgary Herald

New Aboriginal Relations Minister Kathleen Ganley told Treaty 6 chiefs Wednesday the NDP will honour its campaign pledge to repeal a controversial consultation bill that lacked consultation.

Ganley, who also serves as Justice Minister and Solicitor-General, said her government will develop a better consultation process for First Nations in the province.

“This new government has made it a priority to improve the consultation process and ensure respectful consultation occurs on resource development, land management and environmental issues,” she said in a speech in Edmonton. “This is why we made a commitment to repeal Bill 22, the Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act, which was passed by the previous government without adequately consulting with First Nations.”

Ganley assured chiefs that this time they will get a chance to help shape the legislation that establishes a fund that First Nations can draw upon to provide meaningful input into projects.

“We remain committed to working closely and respectfully with you to replace this legislation so First Nations are able to fully participate in the consultation process,” she

told the central Alberta chiefs. “Upcoming and ongoing engagement that is built on a relationship of trust and respect will help shape the future direction of consultation in Alberta.”

Ganley said in a later interview that Bill 22 is not in force and there is no timeline yet established to replace it.

She said the objective of the bill was to have industry contribute to a fund that would provide First Nations with the capacity to respond to the development being proposed on or adjacent to their traditional lands. She cited an example in which a First Nation is provided with 20 thick binders detailing a development, but lacks the resources to study them and respond before the deadline.

“That’s a problem that still exists,” Ganley said. “I think we’ll have to find solutions to that problem, but what we have to do is find solutions to the problem that come from all parties.”

The province’s three major treaty organizations claim they were “blindsided” by the bill that was introduced and passed by the PC government despite their objections. They were concerned the law gave government the authority to “identify” aboriginal groups and to collect the money. They also didn’t like the fact that the minister’s decisions were binding and could not be reviewed.

New Treaty 6 Grand Chief Tony Alexis said the chiefs were happy to hear Ganley confirm the NDP’s campaign commitment to kill the bill and to develop a new relationship with First Nations.

“First Nations and Treaty 6 chiefs want to be more involved — not just informed, but to participate in the planning and development,” he said.

Alexis said Ganley was the first government official to participate in a Treaty 6 induction of a grand chief.

“It was a historic moment,” he said.

Ganley said she was honoured to be part of the ceremony.

“It was amazing to watch,” she said.

In her speech, Ganley also pledged to work with First Nations to improve their representation in Alberta’s school curriculum and to close the achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

The minister said the government is also committed to strengthening the ability of First Nations to participate meaningfully in the economy and benefit from resource development.

“We realize that more work needs to be done to ensure First Nations participate in and benefit from Alberta’s economy,” she said, adding that will begin with an economic development engagement table this fall.

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/aboriginal-relations-minister-vows-repeal-of-controversial-consultation-bill>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Put First Nations in charge of oil pipeline safety and spill response

Roger McDonnell

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jul. 24, 2015 6:45PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Jul. 25, 2015 7:17PM EDT

Roger McDonnell is an anthropologist who has spent decades developing programs with First Nations communities across central Alberta and throughout the boreal forest on issues related to treaty rights, consultation, conservation, justice, health and self-government.

The Nexen pipeline rupture discovered this month near Fort McMurray will, predictably, cause untold contamination to the area’s soil, water, flora and fauna.

It is also a reminder – despite smug reassurances from the federal government – that Canada does not have a “world-class” oil-spill response plan; it has a world-class oil-spill problem. Apathy trumps action when it comes to enacting measures that could diminish the magnitude of future accidents.

What many pipeline advocates and detractors do not realize is that we already have a made-in-Canada response plan that could be up and running very quickly: It is called First Nations.

What currently passes for pipeline monitoring is a variety of remote-sensing gadgets that companies have installed along some of the corridors. Something with the unlikely name of “the whistling pig” can, we are told, detect a breach that is leaking as little as a gallon

an hour. Sounds fantastic. But networks malfunction, targeted cyberattacks happen and, most importantly, whistling pigs do not clean up spills – humans do.

Nexen executives said on Wednesday the spill near Fort McMurray may have gone undetected for two weeks. A spill could occur anywhere along a network of corridors totalling thousands of kilometres in length, much of it through remote wilderness. How could we guarantee that trained people are in the vicinity with the appropriate equipment to provide early spill containment?

One of the best – and most neglected – options is to set up a permanent network of oil-spill response teams. These teams would be stationed at strategic intervals along the pipeline corridors. And they would be composed of trained professionals who possess a strong interest in securing the integrity of the land and water. The teams would ensure eyes-on monitoring of every foot of the pipeline, at least twice a day – and as they did so, they would create a daily record on a broad spectrum of climatic, botanical and zoological concerns.

Everyone agrees that when cleaning up oil, time is of the essence. Not only does more time mean more volume, it also means the spill is harder to clean up. This is particularly true if oil comes into contact with water. In that event, bitumen separates from its diluent and quickly sinks, making it extremely difficult to recover. Given that the routes of current and proposed pipelines traverse thousands of marshes, streams and small rivers that feed two-thirds of the country's major drainage basins, relying purely on remote sensing technology means oil could be gushing over the land and into the water for days before anyone got there.

Spill-response teams, in contrast, would be within minutes or hours of a site. They would have the training and resources to ensure initial containment until, where required, long-term reclamation procedures could be initiated.

If spill-response teams became a reality, First Nations people are ideally suited for such a task. Environmental concerns are particularly pronounced among their communities. In song and ceremony, virtually all First Nation traditions celebrate a mutual and intimate connectivity with the land. Many aboriginal youth consider any contamination of the land a crucial threat to themselves and their cultural heritage. Understanding this relationship helps explain the adamant stand of First Nations anti-pipeline advocates – from Idle No More to Art Sterritt, executive director of B.C.'s Coastal First Nations, who categorically condemned the proposed pipeline plan in his region as a major threat to the land, the people and the wildlife.

Another reason to consider First Nations response teams is that native communities are already in remote areas throughout the country – occupying, however thinly, any pipeline corridor that might be imagined.

And what better source for spill-response teams than the most underemployed demographic in Canada? Training First Nations to do the kind of work many of them find

worthwhile and fulfilling would help effect the kind of transformative change promised to native communities by governmental pipeline supporters – people like Joe Oliver, when he was the federal minister of natural resources.

Incidentally, many First Nations are already on board with this plan. After a recent canvas, several aboriginal communities across Alberta welcomed the idea of permanent pipeline monitoring teams and the employment opportunities these would entail.

First Nations spill-response teams make a whole lot of sense. They would address three issues central to Canadian society: economic growth, environmental protection, and First Nations' unemployment. It is time to give this option serious attention.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/put-first-nations-in-charge-of-oil-pipeline-safety-and-spill-response/article25672460/>

New study highlights concerns over latest demands from Assembly of First Nations

Calgary, AB, Canada / News Talk 770 (CHQR)

July 24, 2015 05:00 pm



A new study is showing that Alberta First Nations could be about to get a bigger piece of the pie when it comes to resource revenue.

Dr. Tom Flannigan, Chair of the Frontier Centre's Aboriginal Futures program, says the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations is calling for a guaranteed share of all resource revenue across Canada, much like a transfer payment, regardless of where the resource is developed.

"This would be in addition to any federal expenditures that now exist and it would be in addition to any benefits they are getting through their contractual arrangements with companies that actually develop the resource. So this would be new revenue on top of everything else."

Flannigan says the demand is for a national program, but he says that likely won't happen given the current economic environment.

However, his concern is that the Alberta NDP will give in to the demand as they review resource royalties and aboriginal policies.

“One of the reasons for bringing the paper out at this point is to make people aware of what might be under discussion in Alberta. We could see this coming here provincially as a proposal even if it doesn’t come nationally because the NDP, in the past at least, has liked this idea.”

Flannigan says the request by the Assembly of First Nations goes against what is in the treaty agreements.

Direct Link: <http://www.newstalk770.com/2015/07/24/new-study-highlights-concerns-over-latest-demands-from-assembly-of-first-nations/>

James Smith Cree Nation students use indigenous knowledge, science in Nîpîy Project

Projects teams high school students, social scientists , scientists and engineers to find solutions to water issues on the First Nation

Reported by **Kelly Malone**

First Posted: Jul 26, 2015 11:32am | Last Updated: Jul 26, 2015 12:57pm

A group of 10 high school students crowded a table in a conference room on the second floor of the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron. They excitedly punched in data about zinc levels in a specimen they brought from their home community, James Smith Cree Nation.

In June, the students finished up a long-running project that combines indigenous knowledge with engineering and science to find solutions to water issues on the First Nation. The project is called Nîpîy, the Cree word for water.

"The issues that we have at home is that on one of the main roads there was a big flood on one side of the reserve. So there is a big lake there now and I don't think they can fix it because there are already fish there. Across the road... there was another lake," Bernard Constant Community School student Taylor Brittain said.

Using the Canadian Light Source (CLS) synchrotron at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), the students discovered what elements were inside the samples. The students were specifically looking for elements that wouldn't naturally be in that environment, but may turn up because constant flooding has changed the landscape. Luckily, in these experiments no particularly toxic elements were found.

"The purpose of doing the project was to find out the elements in the water and how much of it there was. We found a lot of iron in most of the samples that we used, and we

found quite of bit of zinc too," student Rowddie Sanderson said. "I was actually thinking of doing (this for) my life because it's fun doing everything, putting samples in, looking at everything and figuring everything out... it was fun using the machine."

Student Chaz Genaille said he also enjoyed working with the samples and just being in a giant building while Dallas Burns said it was special to do it with his friends.

"My favourite part about this experience was probably just being with everybody and doing this work and the results we got, it was pretty cool how everything is different but similar," Burns said.

Bringing the students in to be hands-on with the project was at the core ideas of the Nîpîy project, assistant professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies at the U of S Robert Innis said. Innis was the local coordinator for the project.

"The project involved originally three communities, two in Ontario, and one in Labrador," Innis said. "They had an advisory board of about 15 to 20 people across Canada and they were academics, people who worked in the field of water and waste water treatment in Inuit First Nations and Metis communities, and non Aboriginal communities."

One of the advisory members was from the James Smith Cree Nation who advocated on behalf of the community to get them involved in the project. The original project started in 2012 and was funded by the Canadian Water Network, while the James Smith portion began in 2013.

"The research is unique in ways because it pairs engineers with social scientists. Usually these two kinds of researches don't work together," Innis said. "So this was kind of unique, and what they aim was to try to determine how and to what degree can indigenous knowledge be utilized for water and waste water management."

Innis also said the way Nîpîy applied indigenous knowledge to water and waste water was completely unique.

"When we are talking about accessing indigenous knowledge... it's not something you can talk to elders and say 'how can you manage water and waste water with the knowledge you have,'" Innis said. "We have to find out is there indigenous knowledge in this instance in the community, and if there is how do you access it? Then, once you access that knowledge, how then do you apply it? There is multiple layers to this that made it a little more complicated."

The project has seen a lot of success and the students are excited to return to their community and speak about what they've learned. They are particularly excited to speak about the involvement of indigenous social scientists and engineers from the U of S.

"We were able to expose the students to thinking about science, but thinking about it

from having indigenous engineers. Also thinking about policy implications from indigenous social sciences," Innis said. "So hopefully having these students think 'these guys did it so we can do it. We can go to university, get our training and come back as scientists or policy analysts .' So ideally, in the long term, this would be a legacy we would like to see happening with the research."

That's especially important for the James Smith Cree Nation who have a new water treatment plant that will need engineers, maintenance and upgrades. The project also began coming up with some practical ways to apply indigenous knowledge, but unfortunately Innis said they "have kind of run out of time".

"The first two years were really about community building, trying to figure out how we do this... Now at the end of our second year, we would be in the ideal position to go into our third year of research, (but) unfortunately we have run out of research funds," he said, adding the Canadian Water Network no longer supplies funding to any projects. "Right now what we are trying to do is access some more research funds to carry it on for another year so that we will be able to hopefully see it through the end."

For Science Projects Manager at CLS Robert Blyth, there is a lot of value in continuing the project.

"If the students are enthusiastic, that opens a door to the community, then the community tells the students what's important to them and what we should be measuring," he said.

"Hopefully this is the start of a really good dialogue between scientists here and the community up north."

Direct Link: <http://ckom.com/story/james-smith-cree-nation-students-use-indigenous-knowledge-science-n-p-y-project/570717>

Duty to consult: First Nations to weigh in on Energy East pipeline project

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: July 27, 2015 | Last Updated: July 27, 2015 6:11 PM EDT



A group of people join marchers that have been marching from Cacouna to Kanestake to raise awareness about the proposed Energy East pipeline that will carry crude oil from Alberta to a port in Cacouna. They are seen at the Suncor oil refinery in Montreal on Thursday June 5, 2014. Allen McNnis / The Gazette

Long before the first tree is cut, before a path is cleared to make way for the sprawling Energy East pipeline, Canada's First Nations people will be heard.

Hundreds will testify before the National Energy Board, detailing how the construction of a 4,600-kilometre pipeline and the tarsands oil it will carry from Alberta to New Brunswick could damage their traditional hunting grounds, fisheries and water supply. All told, they'll speak for thousands of hours, putting forward a small mountain of legal documents in hopes of having some mitigating impact on the project.

The NEB will consider this evidence before deciding whether it will approve Trans Canada's \$12-billion pipeline.

But is that enough? Does that meet the Constitutional obligation the Crown has to consult with and accommodate First Nations whose treaty rights and land claims could be affected by the project?

The Kahnwake and Kanesatake Mohawks don't seem to think so.

While the Crown is constitutionally bound to consult with and accommodate First Nations whose land rights might be affected by Energy East, the federal government does not directly carry that duty out. Instead, that job is off-loaded to the NEB — a board with well-established ties to the oil and gas industry.

"The Crown refuses to engage directly with First Nations people and that's a problem for us," said Francis Walsh, legal counsel. "We can't say much right now but this is something we'll take up with the federal government."

Kanesatake chief Serge Simon will testify before the NEB later this year but holds little hope that he can get the board to stop Energy East from passing through his territory.

Though he'll participate in the hearings, Simon has been hedging his bets. The chief met with aboriginal leaders from across Canada this month and he plans on flying to British Columbia in August to plan a national, direct-action protest movement against the pipeline.

The Mohawks and other groups say it's unethical for the federal government to subcontract its consulting duties to the NEB but that process — of allowing a third party to act on its behalf — is perfectly legal.

"There's nothing, in theory, wrong with the duty being delegated to the (NEB)," said Kirsten Anker, a McGill University law professor. "Whether the board is actually fulfilling the duty is another question."

Anker says Ottawa's responsibilities in these matters evolve on a kind of sliding scale. The more a project has the potential to irreversibly damage aboriginal land or land claims, the greater its duty to consult is. In the case of Energy East — which requires Trans Canada to build 1,600 kilometres of new pipeline alongside access roads, metering stations and infrastructure that spans six provinces — one can only assume the potential for damage is high.

As such, a segment of the NEB proceedings has been set aside to hear traditional oral testimony from aboriginal elders. But aside from that one (largely ceremonial) practice, the First Nations' evidence is presented alongside material from the oil industry and other concerned parties.

While Trans Canada prepares its NEB presentation, legal troubles over a separate pipeline may provide a hint of things to come on the Energy East Front. Over in British Columbia, a First Nation is petitioning the federal court to stop a Trans Canada pipeline from cutting through its traditional territory.

In a motion filed this month, lawyers for the Blueberry River First Nation claim the NEB was ineffective in consulting with them prior to approving Trans Canada's 306-kilometre North Montney Mainline Project. The First Nation commissioned a traditional land use study of the area affected by the natural gas pipeline, but the NEB rejected it because it was not submitted within a mandated deadline.

The land use study was the "single most important piece of written evidence" to support the Blueberry First Nation's claim and the NEB's failure to consider it speaks to a fundamental flaw of the consultation process, according to the July 6 motion. How the federal court rules on this matter could determine the future of Energy East and other pipeline hearings before the NEB.

For its part, the NEB defended its consultation process, reaffirming the value it places on the aboriginal perspective.

“Input by Aboriginal peoples can help provide relevant biophysical and cultural information, help identify potential environmental effects and strengthen mitigation measures,” said Katherine L. Murray, a communications officer with the NEB. “All of this leads to better decisions.”

Murray cited numerous decisions where the NEB imposed additional regulations on pipeline projects because of testimony brought forward by First Nations.

In Kahnawake, there’s a feeling that the NEB’s mandate is too streamlined, too industry-centric and the timetables it imposes on its hearings don’t amount to true consultation. Further compounding their grievance, they say there’s little funding by the NEB to help First Nations review the technical aspects of a project.

“The last time we participated in an NEB hearing, they basically gave us a métro ticket,” said Dennis Diabo, a technician with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. “There is participant funding (from the NEB) but if you want First Nations input, you need to make sure we have the tools to conduct our own technical reviews of the project. The costs of these studies are enormous and we don’t expect the pipeline company to help with it. We’ve funded our own studies, but not every First Nation has that option.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/duty-to-consult-first-nations-to-weigh-in-on-energy-east-pipeline-project>

First Nations concerned about EnergyEast

Tuesday, July 28, 2015 11:12:44 EDT AM



Three Algonquin First Nations expressed the shared concerns of their community members Tuesday about TransCanada's Energy East Project, which crossed through their Aboriginal Title Territory.

“The Nexen Pipeline is reportedly a modern double walled pipeline with detection sensors, which obviously didn't work since about 5 million litres of bitumen and other material leaked out without Nexen knowing about it,” said Harry St. Denis, Wolf Lake Chief. “The proposed Energy East Project involved pumping 1.1 million barrels a day of

new product, thick Oilsands bitumen through a 40 year old pipeline that had a breach a few years ago near Mattawa, Ont.”

The Ontario Energy Board showed two of the First Nations the spill modelling for Trout Lake as the only completed spill model for the three to base decisions upon between North Bay to Deep River within TransCanada's initial National Energy Board application. NEB has requested TransCanada to complete more details of the end of 2015. The First Nations expect the revised NEB application to include the spill models for all of the watersheds within the Aboriginal Title Territory, but particularly at the Turtle Lake crossing.

“The Nexen Oilsands spill catastrophe confirms that we have to do due diligence for our community members and make our environmental, cultural and social concerns are addressed by TransCanada, the regulatory agencies, but especially the government of Canada,” said Chief Lance Haymond of Eagle Village First Nation. “The Energy East Pipeline crosses significant water bodies within our Aboriginal Title territory and our First Nation has expressed concern about the downstream impact of a pipeline rupture at Turtle Lake along the Mattawa National Heritage River flowing into the Ottawa River.”

The three Algonquin First Nations (Timiskaming, Wolf Lake, and Eagle Village) are currently in discussions with TransCanada Pipeline Inc. To see if an agreement can be reached on their concerns. Wolf Lake and Eagle Village First Nation have been accepted by the NEB as Interveners Timiskaming First Nation is also currently seeking Intervener status with the NEB.

Direct Link: <http://www.nugget.ca/2015/07/28/first-nations-concerned-about-energyeast>

National park in Northwest Territories to have significant aboriginal input

by The Canadian Press

Posted Jul 29, 2015 12:01 pm PDT

Last Updated Jul 29, 2015 at 4:42 pm PDT



River water falls over a rock ledge in a forested scene in the Northwest Territories in a handout photo. The likely boundaries of a vast new protected area in the Northwest Territories, called Thaidene Nene, have been revealed. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO-Parks Canada-David Murray

LUTSEL K'E, N.W.T. — The expected boundaries of a vast new protected area in the Northwest Territories have been revealed, along with the unique relationship Parks Canada is to have with the aboriginal people who live there.

“This is not your grandfather’s national park,” said Steve Nitah, head negotiator for the local Dene.

Federal, territorial and aboriginal officials were on hand Wednesday in the remote community of Lutsel K'e to outline the negotiated extent of Thaidene Nene (pronounced tie-DEH-nay NEH-nay), which means Land of the Ancestors in Dene.

“It’s been a lot of hard work,” Nitah said.

Thaidene Nene —originally proposed in the 1970s — is to cover 27,000 square kilometres of spectacular and pristine waterways, forests and Canadian Shield around the eastern arm of Great Slave Lake.

About 14,000 square kilometres is to be managed as a national park. Another 12,000 square kilometres is to become either territorial park or protected caribou habitat. The land under territorial control would have similar protections to the national park.

But nothing will be done on any of it without hearing from the Dene, Nitah said.

They are guaranteed a role with federal staff in planning, managing and operating all aspects of the park, said Nitah. They will be able to continue to hunt, fish and use the land in all the traditional ways they have for centuries.

“They’re going to be involved — very involved — in many aspects of the park management,” said Kevin McNamee, director of protected areas establishment for Parks Canada.

McNamee said the final agreement on co-management has yet to be signed. But he said Parks Canada is giving local communities — especially aboriginal communities — more say when it creates new protected areas.

“What Parks Canada has done is be a leader in establishing and involving a collaborative relationship with aboriginal people.”

Nitah acknowledged that the boundaries going out for public consultation are significantly smaller than the original ones. About 8,000 square kilometres have been withdrawn because they are thought to hold resource potential.

“It was very important for the government of the Northwest Territories that that happen. I think we’ve done well in representing our interests in ensuring that very key ecological and cultural areas were protected.”

N.W.T. Environment Minister Michael Miltenberger makes no apologies for hiving off about a quarter of the original proposal.

“There’s considerable mineral wealth, real and potential,” he said. “There’s diamonds for sure. There’s some potential uranium. We haven’t done the mineral assessments necessary in all areas.”

Miltenberger said the remaining land is large enough to protect the ecosystem and will also connect with conservation areas to the east, such as the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary.

Thaidene Nene includes both boreal forest and tundra threaded with lakes, rivers and waterfalls. The east arm of Great Slave Lake boasts spectacular cliffs and islands and some of the deepest freshwater in North America.

Wildlife includes moose, muskoxen, wolves, bears, wolverines, many species of birds and fish and the Beverly-Ahiak barren-ground caribou herd.

Thaidene Nene is a Dene homeland, said Nitah.

“Our whole memory and understanding of who we are comes from there. Our culture and language is pretty tied to the land.”

The boundaries will now go out for public comment. Once that’s complete, legislation creating the park and outlining its implementation must be drafted and passed.

— By Bob Weber in Edmonton. Follow him on Twitter at @row1960.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/07/29/possible-boundaries-for-new-nwt-national-park-revealed/>

Drought prompts B.C. First Nations group to close Osoyoos-area fishery

The Canadian Press
July 29, 2015 02:42 PM

KELOWNA, B.C. - Drought conditions in British Columbia have forced the closure of another fishery in the province's southern Interior.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance has suspended the commercial and recreational sockeye salmon fishery on Osoyoos Lake after high water temperature led to more fish disease, infection and death.

Okanagan sockeye salmon numbers appeared healthy earlier this year, with more than 500,000 fish counted swimming up the Columbia and Okanagan rivers.

But the tribal alliance says only 5,000 to 15,000 sockeye have so far made it to Osoyoos Lake.

Fishing on the nearby Kettle River south of the lake was banned earlier this summer.

Both B.C. and the Department of Fisheries have also suspended angling on the Middle Shuswap River to protect fish stocks vulnerable to warm water temperatures and low flow rates.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/drought-prompts-b-c-first-nations-group-to-close-osoyoos-area-fishery-1.2015729#sthash.wM2kBTka.dpuf>

Drought prompts B.C. First Nations group to close central Interior fishery

by The Canadian Press

Posted Jul 29, 2015 5:54 pm EDT

Last Updated Jul 29, 2015 at 6:40 pm EDT

KELOWNA, B.C. – Drought conditions in British Columbia have forced the closure of another fishery in the province's southern Interior.

The Okanagan Nation Alliance has suspended the commercial and recreational sockeye salmon fishery on Osoyoos Lake after high water temperature led to more fish disease, infection and death.

Okanagan sockeye salmon numbers appeared healthy earlier this year, with more than 500,000 fish counted swimming up the Columbia and Okanagan rivers.

But the tribal alliance says only 5,000 to 15,000 sockeye have so far made it to Osoyoos Lake.

Fishing on the nearby Kettle River south of the lake was banned earlier this summer.

Both B.C. and the Department of Fisheries have also suspended angling on the Middle Shuswap River to protect fish stocks vulnerable to warm water temperatures and low flow rates. (CKFR, The Canadian Press)

Direct Link: <http://www.680news.com/2015/07/29/drought-prompts-b-c-first-nations-group-to-close-central-interior-fishery/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Confrontation escalates as LNG battles First Nations for land access

'We're blocking pipelines; we're not blocking everyone', Unist'ot'en Camp spokesperson Freda Huson tells RCMP at the Bulkley Valley road "checkpoint."

[Vancouver Observer](#)

Jul 27th, 2015



ACCESS DENIED: A still from video footage shows Houston RCMP officers requesting Unist'ot'en Camp spokesperson Freda Huson for access on July 15. When that failed, Chevron American officials tried on July 23 and got the same response.

A month after the B.C. government conditionally [approved a liquefied natural gas project](#) led by Royal Dutch Shell in Kitimat, the Unist'ot'en Camp has reported escalating confrontations as RCMP and the LNG industry seek access to its unceded territory.

In recent days supporters of the Unist'ot'en Camp have uploaded three videos showing clashes with RCMP and pipeline officials.

The latest recording, posted on July 26, shows TransCanada employees for the Shell project arriving in the area by helicopter. They were soon grounded by supporters who stood in the path of the rotor blades:

A July 15 video posted on YouTube shows attempts by the Mounties to pass a "checkpoint" set up by the First Nations camp, and on July 23, [another video](#) shows Chevron officials requesting access. Both were denied.

"It is becoming clear that the situation here is moving toward an escalation point," states a July 18 letter from Unist'ot'en Camp. "Today at one o'clock a low flying helicopter flew over the ridge line and crossed the river a couple kilometers south of the bridge," according to the "call out" letter. "They flew low enough to take photos of activity happening at (the) bridge and our camp."



A still from a video posted on the Unist'ot'en Camp's facebook page on July 23 documenting Chevron American officials, each wearing cameras, requesting road access.

"Camp supporters blocked the RCMP from entering," reads the text in the uploaded video. "The following day, the RCMP threatened to arrest supporters at another checkpoint, but supporters built a gate."



Above, a still from a video posted on YouTube.

While police at the Houston detachment have maintained that they intend to "ensure the work crews can do their work safely" and have the lawful right to arrest anyone blocking

a public road, the Camp letter states, “We have made it clear to the police and industry that we are not blockading the road. We are establishing check-points on the boundaries of our unceded Unist’ot’en territories. People and companies who gain our consent are allowed to enter.”



The Unist’ot’en Camp has [requested](#) “physical support from allies” as the situation escalates. This raises the spectre of another Kinder Morgan-style conflict.

Direct Link: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/confrontation-escalates-lng-battles-first-nations-land-access>

Métis rights tops agenda at Ile-X gathering

Posted by [Northern Pride](#) on July 28, 2015



Geordy McCaffrey (left), executive director of Gabriel Dumont Institute, spoke about economic development opportunities during the Métis gathering held near Ile-a-la Crosse on the weekend. Also pictured is event co-chair Jim Durocher.

by Phil Ambroziak

By working together, great things can be accomplished.

That's what northwest Saskatchewan's Métis population has come to discover following a recent gathering near Ile-a-la Crosse designed to promote cooperation amongst peers, as well as raise awareness and garner support for land and harvesting rights, economic development opportunities and more.

"Overall, I believe everyone is satisfied with how the weekend is going," remarked Brennan Merasty, president of A La Baie Métis Local 21 when contacted Sunday morning. "We've had a great turnout, the facilitators have given some very good presentations and provided a tremendous amount of information to the Métis people of the Northwest."

Merasty said the three-day gathering, which took place July 24-26 at South Bay War Veterans' Park south of Ile-a-la Crosse, also allowed those in attendance an opportunity to provide feedback to Tom Isaac, head of Osler's Aboriginal Law Group who was appointed by the federal government as the ministerial special representative to lead engagement with Métis.

"The basic message being shared this weekend is how Métis people can be engaged when it comes to such things as resource management, development and, most importantly, Métis rights," Merasty continued.

Close to 100 people attended the event while other special guests included Kathy Hodgson-Smith of the Métis Legal Research and Education Foundation, Métis National Council president Clem Chartier, Dr. Kenichi Matsui of Tsukuba University in Japan, Gabriel Dumont Institute executive director Geordy McCaffrey and more.

"Representatives from Métis locals in Alberta also came out to share their experiences in asserting Métis rights," Merasty said.

The Alberta contingent included Ron Quintal, president of the Fort McKay Métis Community Association and president of the Wood Buffalo Métis.

"As a collective, Métis rights have never really been the focus in this country or in Alberta and Saskatchewan," Quintal noted. "This event is a great opportunity to bring people together to discuss common issues. We live in Alberta, but a lot of the issues we face are mirrored in Saskatchewan. We're here to share some of the successes we've had with the Métis people in this province and vice versa."

The main subject discussed Sunday was economic development and Quintal said it was his desire to enlighten the Métis people from the Northwest about how to both prepare and adapt to deal with future industry development.

Ile-a-la Crosse mayor Duane Favel, meanwhile, expressed his gratitude for such support.

“To be able to come together and discuss economic development opportunities is always exciting for us,” Favel said. “We’re always looking for ways to engage the economy and to bring prosperity to the Métis community.”

The weekend gathering was hosted by the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council, a reinvigorated group originally formed in the 1990s.

“The formation of such a council is provided in the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) constitution and basically features two regions encompassing the entire Northwest,” Chartier explained.

For the last two years, however, Chartier said the council no longer held meetings regularly. It wasn’t until recently, area Métis leaders felt passionate enough to revive the organization.

Merasty described the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council as an affiliate of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.

“Some northern Métis leaders got together in Alberta recently for a Métis rights and economic development symposium,” he said. “A suggestion was made at that time to revive the council, to rejuvenate it and to look at bringing back to life the Northwest Métis land claim.”

Direct Link: <http://northernprideml.com/2015/07/28/metis-rights-tops-agenda-at-ile-x-gathering/>

New war in the woods?

An escalating conflict in traditional wilderness territory is unfolding in near real time through YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, culminating this week in a July 30 rally in downtown Vancouver.

[Vancouver Observer](#)

Jul 30th, 2015



Camp 'checkpoint' in the Bulkley Valley; Freda Huson

The powder keg that is the Unist'ot'en camp in the Bulkley Valley of B.C.'s Central Interior is the top issue behind a rally tonight (July 30) [CBC Plaza](#), 700 Hamilton St., 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The event, organized by [Rising Tide](#), will be in support for Unist'ot'en camp's continued effort to turn away RCMP, security contractors and pipeline employees attempting to enter unceded territory, access necessary to connect oil to tankers on the West Coast near Prince Rupert.

"This event hopes to confront the police violence brought to people all over the world. This is not an isolated issue," a press release from the Unist'ot'en camp states. "Join us to hear from those who have been to the camp and learn about how powerful life on the land has been."

Freda Huson, spokesperson for the Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, has maintained a checkpoint at the bridge into her territory for the last six years.

"I am not demonstrating. I am not protesting," she is quoted as saying in the Rising Tide call to action. "I am occupying our traditional homelands."

Above, a video posted on YouTube by the Unist'ot'en Camp gives a summary of recent events leading up to this week's rally.

The community is calling on the RCMP to hold police officers accountable for the violence they commit against frontline communities such as Unist'ot'en, and on the provincial and federal governments to respect indigenous sovereignty, states Rising Tide.

Speakers include: Vancouver artist/activist Audrey Siegl who recently joined a Greenpeace initiative to intercept a Shell drilling rig on its way to its Alaska; Harsha Walia, and author of *Undoing Border Imperialism*; Neelam Khare, an emerging artist, community organizer, film-maker and student who has visited the camp; and Rita Wong, author of three books of poetry who recently visited the Unis'tot'en camp and [wrote an article](#) about the Unist'ot'en camp.

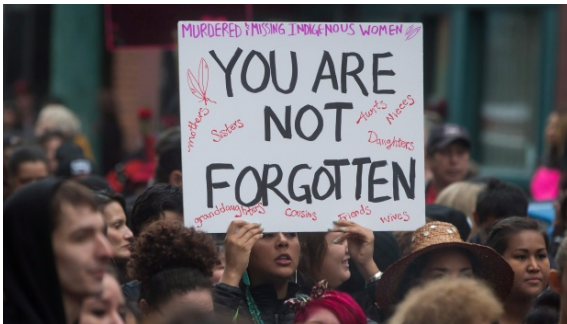
Direct Link: <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/new-war-woods>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

UN's calls for inquiry into missing, murdered aboriginal women welcomed by First Nations poet and activist

Lee Maracle says Canada has to uphold all of the TRC's recommendations

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 23, 2015 4:03 PM PT Last Updated: Jul 23, 2015 4:07 PM PT



A woman holds a sign as hundreds of people march through the Downtown Eastside during the 25th annual Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, B.C., on Saturday February 14, 2015. The march is held to honour missing and murdered women and girls from the community with stops along the way to commemorate where women were last seen or found. (Darryl Dyck/Canadian Press)

First Nations poet, professor and activist [Lee Maracle](#) said Canada must heed the [United Nations Human Rights Committee call Thursday](#) to launch an inquiry into the high number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

"There just isn't enough investigation, and there isn't enough concern," Maracle told [The Early Edition](#)'s Rick Cluff.

"It should be considered a national crisis really, it's not just our community that's affected...Canada's reputation globally is really being damaged by its failure [to hold an inquiry]."



Lee Maracle is a poet, author, activist and instructor (Jason D'Souza/CBC)

Maracle, who was one of the first First Nations students in the public school system, was a vocal critic of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission which investigated the Indian Residential Schools system.

She said it is imperative that the government follows through on the commission's 94 recommendations, which include the creation and funding for new aboriginal education legislation that protects languages and cultures, and the creation of a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

"People have to understand that this is in lieu of court, this is in lieu of us suing Canada's ass," Maracle said. "Unless we get all those recommendations, there isn't going to be equality in this country."

Keynote message at new Coast Salish festival

Maracle, who is a member of the Sto:lo Nation, will be giving the keynote message at a new festival celebrating Coast Salish peoples.

The [All Nations Festival in Coquitlam](#) runs from Thursday to Saturday (July 23 to 25), and features performances, panel discussions, art exhibitions and traditional food.

Maracle, who also teaches at the University of Toronto, said her keynote message on Friday evening will discuss the environmental issues facing the world.

"We're facing a mass extinction event and Coast Salish people have experience with this - all our flood stories talk about it. We have something to offer the world in terms of, 'Look, we didn't learn the last time, let's get it right this time and use art to speak about it.'"

Maracle also told Cluff that with a federal election slated for October it is important for aboriginal people to participate.

"Join a party and get involved, get talking to people," she said. "Right now they can say only ten percent of native people vote. But if you've got someone in your constituency that's making noise you're going to get somewhere."

Maracle, whose grandfather was Salish actor and Chief Dan George, recently released her latest book, *Celia's Song*. It has been nominated for a Governor General's award.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/un-s-calls-for-inquiry-into-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-welcomed-by-first-nations-poet-and-activist-1.3165608>

Mural of First Nations Women Bound and Gagged Sparks Outrage

[ICTMN Staff](#)

7/28/15

A painting of two First Nations women on a storefront in Bathurst, New Brunswick, has incensed Natives who say that it is insensitive given the crisis of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women.

The women in the painting are depicted bound and gagged on the deck of a ship. The scene comes from a local story, the "Legend of the Phantom Ship," which is [recounted at length on the official Bathurst website](#). Here's the passage that relates to the painting:

The pilot was in for a big surprise; he found two Indian girls, tied up and completely covered with pelts. The pirates had kidnapped them, while their parents were drunk. The captain and his first mate intended to have their way with these two girls and to throw them in the sea afterwards. This is what they did, or tried to do, at each trip.

Another painting, depicting a standing priest or ship's captain speaking to three Native women who are seated, was also found to be in questionable taste. [As the Halifax Media Co-op explained](#), "No explanation – rational or otherwise – accompanied the two images in the storefront window in which they appeared."

The paintings were commissioned by the Bathurst Art Society for the town's "Hospitality Days" festival, which ran July 20-26. Both images were on display for the duration of the festival, although they have been removed now due to the outcry. Patty Musgrave, Aboriginal advisor for NBCC Moncton and host of the campus' annual Sisters in Spirit vigil, sent a scathing open letter to Bathurst City Council. It reads, in part:

The painting that made me the sickest was depicting two Mi'kmaq women, ankles and hands bound and mouths covered. Yes, I am aware of the sickening "legend" of the Phantom Ship and unlike most of New Brunswick, understand the history of this coastal

area and the rapes and most likely murders of Mi'kmaq women that took place with each ship arriving in the bay. Murders. These women are now our Ancestors. They were degraded and used and abused and left for dead over the side of ships. Ripped from their families and for the most part, never to be seen again.

Were you aware that still happens today? Were you aware of the social media hashtag #MMIW? It stands for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Were you aware or do you even acknowledge that there are approximately 1800 missing and/or murdered women across this country as we speak? Were you aware that a National Inquiry is one of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee? Do you know what the TRC is? Do you understand what it all means? Have you heard of Sisters in Spirit? Do you know that each October 4th NATIONALLY we hold vigils to honour our Missing and Murdered sisters...including those who died centuries ago. Because it is STILL happening Mayor, Council and Committee. Please feel free to see nwac.ca to educate yourselves.

Patricia Mae Grant of the Pabineau First Nation [told CTV News Atlantic](#) that she was "absolutely shocked" and "really surprised that that sort of imagery would be up there," but added that "I really don't think it was an intentional attack or anything like that. I think it was just not thought out."

Rita May Gates, president of the Bathurst Art Society, told CTV that "We are all really sorry that some people have been hurt. ... I was hurt because some people were hurt. I take things personal. I am the president and I take full responsibility."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/28/mural-first-nations-women-bound-and-gagged-sparks-outrage-161211>

Missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry needed, Calgary council says

Councillors vote to have Mayor Nenshi send a letter to Ottawa

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 27, 2015 8:36 PM MT Last Updated: Jul 27, 2015 8:36 PM MT

Calgary city council is supporting calls for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Council voted 11 to 4 Monday morning to have Mayor Naheed Nenshi send a letter to the federal government, calling on it to hold a public inquiry.

The inquiry was a recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which released its report earlier this year.

City council has also called for administrators to present a plan for the city's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by next spring.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-inquiry-needed-calgary-council-says-1.3170385>

Special Topic: Residential Schools & ‘60s Scoop

Indigenous community shares stories of survival decades after the 60’s Scoop

By Shannon Cuciz Global News, July 25, 2015 2:27 pm



WINNIPEG – When Melba Sanoffsky’s children were taken from her by child-welfare services in the middle of the night, she didn’t know if she’d ever see them again.

Finally reunited again after years of being apart, she is sharing her family’s story and she’s not the only one.

Thousands of aboriginal children were plucked from their homes and placed with non-aboriginal families during the 1960’s to the 1980’s, now known as the 60’s Scoop.

“When they send your child away from you and stick them in foreign places with strangers and kids and abuse them... when you get that child back that’s not the same child you had,” said Sanoffsky.

Hundreds of Indigenous men and women who were placed in foster care during the scoop are in Winnipeg to talk about the pain from their past.

“Their message is it’s not over. Canada said their sorry for the mass removals of aboriginal children but it’s still going on,” said executive director of the First Nations Child and Caring Society Cindy Blackstock.

The public event called Connecting Our Spirits was put on by the Manitoba Indigenous Adoptees Coalition with the support of the province. The goal is to help survivors heal together.

“This gathering shows that there are others like us, we have people right across the country and North America and overseas that have attended here,” said M.I.A.C. president Skip Gagnon Delaronde.

All of the stories and information shared will be presented by the M.I.A.C. to the government at a fundraising gala this fall. The money will go toward organizing more events aiming to create positive change in the future.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2131198/indigenous-community-share-stories-of-survival-decades-after-the-60s-scoop/>

Taking steps for change

July 25, 2015, POSTED BY [The Right Reverend Logan McMenamie](#)

"This should be not an election issue, but *the* election issue," said Rex Murphy.

What was Rex speaking about? He was talking about the journey of healing and reconciliation with First Nation Peoples. Why am I speaking about something political for an article on spirituality? Well, I believe this to be a spiritual issue. We are speaking about healing and reconciliation for people, which is about spirituality. We are talking about healing from the abuses of residential schools; from the abuses, which were sexual, emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual and cultural. The abuse suffered by First Peoples at the hands of government and churches is a spiritual issue for us as Canadians and all people of faith.

I was recently at the symbolic demolition of St. Michael’s Residential School in Alert Bay. For me it was a powerful experience. I was given the honour of speaking at the event and was proud to be able to offer an apology for the involvement of our church in residential schools. We failed the Creator, we failed First Nations People and we failed ourselves. We do not offer this apology because it lets us off and we can go on with life as usual. We offer this apology as the first step of many that are before us. The next steps of the journey are truth telling, healing and reconciliation. Apologies are never the end to a journey but the first step towards healing.

We are committed to learning from the ways of First Nations people –to learn from their traditions, culture and language –because in all of these we discover the Creator.

First Peoples have the skills and gifts, the traditions, culture and the language to bring healing to themselves, their families and to this nation.

What would healing and reconciliation look like for our nation? How do we set aside time to seek forgiveness, and lament as settlers? I believe that the soul of our nation needs to experience healing from our involvement in the residential schools. As residential schools have had a generational effect on First Nations people and their families, we must realize that our involvement as a nation has had a generational effect on us as well. We have not come through this experience as passive observers, but as a nation that has been deeply affected by this experience and is in need of healing and reconciliation. Chief Dan George named this need for lament as Canada celebrated its 100th anniversary: "Today, when you celebrate your hundred years, oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land."

As we look at this need for healing, could we set aside one day a year for national lament? A day when we remember our part in this wrongdoing, and ask the Creator to heal and restore us? In the wonderful mosaic of faith traditions in our country can this be a multi-faith event drawing on the rich traditions of Canada's multiculturalism?

A lament for our nation might look something like this: *I gave you relatives and family and they looked to you as brothers and sisters and you turned on them with abuse and your calculated neglect caused many deaths. I made them as a people rich in faith and culture and you made treaties with them and they put their trust in your words, but you tried to create them in your own image and destroyed their culture, language and image.*

This may well be *the* election issue for us. However, it is also an essential spiritual issue, for us and the soul of our nation.



The Right Reverend Logan McMenamie is the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of British Columbia.

Direct Link: <http://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/blogs/spiritually-speaking-1.61091/taking-steps-for-change-1.2012240?blogRssReaderId=7.1014>

Truth and Reconciliation positive for First Nations

By [Evan Boudreau, The Catholic Register](#)

- July 30, 2015

Although a national poll showed Canada appears divided on the value of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Catholic Church leaders said a positive impact has already been felt among native communities.

“It was worthwhile for the native people in Canada,” said Fr. Milton McWatch, pastor of Holy Saviour parish in Marathon, Ont., in the Diocese of Thunder Bay. His parish has extensive relations with local First Nations’ communities.

“For the first time a lot of them were able to say, ‘Hey, you know that residential school was really awful.’ That has already had an affect and it is going to change the lifestyle, the culture, of the native people.”

He said that by providing counselling and access to social workers during the years of consultation used to draft the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report and 94 recommendations delivered to the federal government this June, a voice was given to thousands of residential school survivors.

“They had lost all sense of who they were and I would say that they lost their ability to speak until the Truth and Reconciliation (Commission) came along,” said McWatch, who has personally benefited from counselling in his life. “If that hadn’t happened they’d still be wondering why am I so screwed up in life.”

The commission was struck in 2008 to respond to allegations of abuse — sexual, physical and psychological — that occurred at the schools that ran for 150 years until the final school closed in 1996. More than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children went through the government-mandated schools that for the most part were run by church entities, more than 60 per cent of which were Catholic. Today, more than 80,000 former students of the schools are still living.

But not all Canadians see the value in the six-year process that followed a class-action lawsuit brought by residential school survivors against the federal government and the various groups which ran the residential schools.

A recent survey conducted by Angus Reid Institute found that only 48 per cent of those polled, more than 1,500, felt the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was worthwhile for Canadians in general while 56 per cent were “moderately optimistic” that the commission “will result in a better situation for Canada’s aboriginal people.”

Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen said that’s a pessimistic view that ignores much of the “healing” which has already occurred due to the commission.

“There were truths that needed to be spoken,” said Bolen, who helped draft a formal apology from the Church to natives who had been through the residential school system. “We hear from the indigenous people that it matters to tell their story and it matters to them to hear an apology.”

He said that holding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission caused a cultural shift towards building a “strong relationship on the truth” with Canada’s First Nations.

Proof of this can be seen in the Diocese of Saskatoon, where a Diocesan Truth and Reconciliation Council has been established. The council is made up of 10 representatives from the Church as well as 10 First Nations community leaders. They are to meet every two months for discussions on topics such as youth engagement, history from an aboriginal perspective as well as missing and murdered women.

“I definitely think it was a worthwhile thing to be done,” he said. “It was an invitation to change. There was very little sense (before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) that we needed to build relationships, that we needed to walk together. We are trying to do that now.”

Direct Link: <http://www.catholicregister.org/item/20653-truth-and-reconciliation-positive-for-first-nations>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Citing Religious Freedom, Native Americans Fight To Take Back Sacred Land From Mining Companies

by [Jack Jenkins](#) Jul 24, 2015 8:00am



Advocates for the protection of Oak Flat protest outside the U.S. Capitol on July 22, 2015.

For generations, members of the Apache Native American tribe have viewed Oak Flat as a holy, sacred place. Located about an hour due east of Phoenix, Arizona, the land has long served as a site for traditional acorn gatherings, burial services, and rite of passage ceremonies for young women. The flat is tucked inside Arizona’s Tonto National Forest, and has historically been protected by the federal government.

“It’s our sacred land — it’s where we come to pray,” Carrie Sage Curley, an Apache woman, told ThinkProgress.

But last year, the land quietly became something else: A proposed site for a massive copper mining project spearheaded by Resolution Copper, an organization run by two multinational corporations based in the United Kingdom and Australia.

The aggressive mining operation resulted from a last-minute addition to the National Defense Authorization Act, a “must-pass” military spending bill pushed through in December 2014. The language, which was inserted at the 11th hour by Arizona Senators John McCain (R) and Jeff Flake (R), essentially traded Resolution 2,400 acres of Arizona (including Oak Flat) in exchange for 5,300 acres of private land they already own. The swap is believed to be one of the first instances of federal land being given to a foreign corporation.

We protect these temples, why can’t we do the same for our sacred land?

Arizona’s Native American population was outraged by the deal, having fought against [several efforts](#) by Republicans in Congress to broker similar agreements over the years. Some locals have argued that the [land grab shortchanges American taxpayers](#), since profits will go primarily to companies rooted outside the United States. In addition, environmentalists and the Apache people have repeatedly expressed fears that, since the mining industry is often exempt from portions of environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act, the invasive copper mining project could damage the area’s water — a resource many Native Americans claim a spiritual obligation to protect.

“I have a great-grandmother who is buried at Oak Flat — we want to respect her, let her rest in peace,” said Sandra Rambler, an Apache woman from San Carlos, Arizona, told ThinkProgress. “My granddaughter had a [religious] dance there last year, and I’m hoping that my future grandchildren will dance there as well.”

The religious connections to Oak Flat are so powerful that mining the land could constitute a violation of the [American Indian Religious Freedom Act](#). That law, which was passed in 1978, stipulates that the federal government has an obligation to protect the religious liberty of Native Americans — including guaranteeing access to sites they hold sacred.

“It’s the same thing as a church,” Curley said. “We protect these temples, why can’t we do the same for our sacred land?”

Representatives from Resolution Copper have rejected such claims, [insisting](#) they intend to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and “laws that protect Native American cultural and sacred sites.” They also note that the deal doesn’t include any reservation lands and mandates protections for nearby historic site “Apache Leap,” which is reportedly where Apache warriors threw themselves off a cliff rather than surrender to American forces in 1870.



Advocates for the protection of Oak Flat dance outside the U.S. Capitol.

But Native Americans and environmental groups remain skeptical of such promises, and several groups are beginning to fight back against the land deal — this time with the help of federal lawmakers. In June, Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) [introduced](#) the “Save Oak Flat Act,” which would protect the land from further mining operations.

“As a result of previous Federal land policies that resulted in the significant loss of lands of American Indian tribes, many sacred areas of tribes are now located on Federal lands,” the bill reads. “The United States has a trust responsibility acknowledged by Congress to protect tribal sacred areas on Federal lands. [The deal] sets dangerous legislative precedent for the lack of protection of tribal sacred areas located on Federal lands ... [and] will require significant amounts of water that will likely affect the local hydrology,

including the underlying aquifer, and will result in polluted water that will seep into drinking water supplies.”

But while the bill lists [24 bipartisan co-sponsors](#) and is endorsed by both the National Congress of American Indians and the Sierra Club, it is expected to face [significant hurdles](#) before it can be considered by lawmakers. As such, Native Americans have begun mobilizing to draw attention to the issue: Over the past few weeks, advocates have solicited [op-eds in the New York Times](#), visited Native American reservations across the country to drum up support, and held [dramatic protests](#) in Times Square and at the United Nations in New York City.

The campaign crescendoed this week in Washington, D.C., when a group organized largely by Native American advocacy organization [Apache Stronghold](#) staged a series of protest actions over the course of two days. In addition to a procession at Rock Creek Park, Native Americans embarked on a spiritual “run” throughout the city on Tuesday that concluded with a prayer service in front of the White House. And on Wednesday, a hundred or so supporters rallied on the West Lawn in front of the U.S. Capitol building to dance, chant, and give speeches expressing their frustration with the mining project.

“We have a freedom of religion,” Wendsler Nosie Sr., an Apache elder and former tribal chairman, told the crowd. “Congress shouldn’t ignore rights of people ... It’s not right. Congress should repeal the law.”



Spirit run participants pray outside the White House on July 21, 2015

Participants at the rally hailed from a number of different tribes, but they were unanimous in their condemnation of efforts to mine Oak Flat.

“I feel violated — I feel like I’ve been raped,” Rambler said, choking back tears as she spoke about the possible destruction of a place she calls holy. “I feel that the earth has been raped. The Native American people are the caretakers of Mother Earth. When she’s violated, we’re violated. When you desecrate the land, you desecrate us.”

“When you take that away, you take away the identity of the Apaches,” she said.

It remains to be seen whether Congress will repeal what Rambler called the “sneaky rider” that McCain and Flake used to create the controversy. There is ample reason to be skeptical, as American history is rife with examples of Native Americans consistently losing fights with the federal government over land. As the Huffington Post [noted this week](#), Native Americans in Hawaii and California are currently embroiled in efforts to keep outside groups from developing on their sacred spaces.

Yet Curley and other attendees at this week’s protests expressed dogged determination and a surprising degree of righteous optimism, pulling strength from the same source that drew them to Oak Flat in the first place: Their faith.

“We’re going to win this fight,” Curley said. “It’s a spiritual thing, and I know in my spirit, we’re going to win.”

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/07/24/3683935/citing-religious-freedom-native-americans-fight-take-back-sacred-land-mining-companies/>

N.J. must recognize Lenni-Lenape as Native American tribe | Editorial

Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Pow-Wow at Salem County Fairgrounds, Saturday, June 13, 2015. (Stephanie Maksin | For NJ.com)

By [South Jersey Times Editorial Board](#)
on July 24, 2015 at 7:15 AM

In middle school, we learned that most of South Jersey was settled by the Lenni-Lenape Indian tribe. There is even a high school in Burlington County named "Lenape."

A [new lawsuit by the tribe's descendants](#) suggests that Gov. Chris Christie and his staff were absent when they studied these Native Americans, many of whom now live Cumberland and Salem counties. The Legislature, if it heard the history lesson, fell asleep before it ended.

Tribal lawyers say they filed a civil rights action against the state and Christie because New Jersey's formal recognition of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape as a tribe has mysteriously disappeared.

The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape are best known to outsiders for the colorful pow-wows it holds in Pilesgrove Township. More than exhibitions of traditional dress and ceremony

are at stake, however, if the tribe's official recognition, first granted in 1982 by legislative resolution, has been revoked.

Tribal members could lose \$240,000 in annual income if they can't market craft items as authentic, according to the lawsuit. Also, about \$600,000 in health care grants -- this is federal, not state, funds, -- could be withdrawn.

The state attorney general's office won't answer questions about the suit, which claims that the Christie administration has stopped communicating with the tribe over the issue.

A 2011 legislative [effort to reaffirm recognition of the Lenni-Lenape and two other tribes died after Assembly passage](#). The bills were reintroduced in the next session, but went nowhere. If there are any current bills, we can't find them.

Why is this happening? Why all the silence?

Suspensions include fears that the tribe would try to open a casino, although its charter and religious beliefs specifically exclude it. In 2001, the Division of Gaming Enforcement apparently told the federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board that New Jersey had no native American Indian tribes. Did then-Atlantic City casino moguls exert unfair influence? (Yes, you, Mr. Trump.)

Also, [in 2012 the Bridgeton Library had to cancel, over a threat of violence, a lecture by Dr. Marshall Becker](#). In earlier statements, the anthropology professor challenged the Nanticoke-Lenni-Lenape's claims to Native American descent. The Bridgeton talk was eventually rescheduled. But Becker said in a *Times* interview that his research was only preliminary.

First, clarify the tribe's current status. There's no reason the administration can't do so publicly. If the Lenni-Lenape are in limbo, end any doubt with legislation recognizing them. If evidence that they're not "real," turns up, recognition can be rescinded. For now, it's senseless to deny the tribe the meager public benefits to which it lays claim, and for presidential aspirant Christie to stand accused of civil rights violations.

Direct Link: http://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/07/nj_must_recognize_lenni-lenape_as_native_american.html

Trial of man accused of harassing Native Americans ends

July 23, 2015 2:37 pm

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The trial of a South Dakota man accused of harassing American Indian children with racial slurs and spilling beer on them at a hockey game ended Thursday but a judge said he won't issue a decision for several weeks.

Trace O'Connell pleaded not guilty to a disorderly conduct charge in Rapid City. The January incident spurred protests by Native Americans in South Dakota's second-largest city, with critics saying the charge was too lenient.

Magistrate Judge Eric Strawn said Thursday that it may take three to four weeks before he reaches a decision in the case. He said he recognizes the importance of the trial to everyone involved and will write a lengthy decision.

O'Connell was among about 20 people in a suite at the hockey game. Seated directly below the suite was a group of 50 students and seven adult chaperons from American Horse School, which is in the town of Allen on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The trial ended quickly after Michael Butler, O'Connell's attorney, called no witnesses, and both sides proceeded to closing arguments. City Attorney Joel Landeen called 12 witnesses Wednesday.

Butler argued Thursday the city is trying to hold his client accountable for the actions of the entire group he was with. He said there is no evidence that shows O'Connell spoke to a single child in the group.

Landeen told the court that O'Connell did spray beer, that it was not an accident and that, at minimum, it was reckless.

Activists have protested the leniency of O'Connell's disorderly conduct charge under city code. The judge's decision to remove the possibility of jail time as a penalty also spurred anger from activists. Without jail time the maximum penalty is a fine of up to \$500.

Supporters of the American Indian students said they weren't happy with how the trial played out and criticized the prosecution.

"The public certainly doesn't feel that any justice has been served and ... it would be appropriate to either call a mistrial or to have a re-hearing with an independent prosecutor because we just don't feel that justice has been served," Chase Iron Eyes, a Native American attorney and advocate from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, told KOTA-TV.

Direct Link: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/state-and-regional/trial-of-man-accused-of-harassing-native-americans-ends/article_aa3512ca-6d35-5ba7-b2aa-f398f6943070.html

'Strong bond' unites Catholic Native Americans

[Miranda Klein](#), mquartemon@thetowntalk.com, (318) 487-6354 5:39 p.m. CDT July 23, 2015



Hundreds of Catholic Native Americans gathered this week in Alexandria to celebrate a shared faith, culture and family-like bond.

The 76th Annual Tekakwitha Conference came to Louisiana for the first time this year and brought with it members of more than 150 tribes from 34 states.

For Chief Rufus Davis of the Adai Caddo Indian Tribe from Natchitoches, it was a sight to see.

"It's awesome to see all these tribes from different places," Davis said. "It really makes you think."

Davis and other Adai Caddo Indians, in full regalia, marched in the "grand entry" Thursday morning at the Alexandria Riverfront Center. Davis said it was his first conference, and he was most excited for the opportunity to honor Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

"We think it's great we have a Native-American Saint, and it's an honor and opportunity to honor her with all the tribes," Davis said. "She's the one that brought us together."

'A strong bond'

Sister Kateri Mitchell of the Mohawk Indian Tribe and executive director of the annual Tekakwitha Conference described those who attended as a "family."

"We have formed a strong bond," Mitchell said.

The conference welcomes all ages and includes services, singing, keynotes, workshops and a Pow Wow.

“We have the whole intergenerational experience of the affirmation of our elders,” Mitchell said of the experience. “And the calling for our young people to also experience and deepen their faith.”

The Tekakwitha Conference moves to a state in a different region of the country every year. But no matter where it goes, Catherine “Charging-Hawk” of the Yankton Sioux Indian Tribe from South Dakota says she’s there.

She is the only Native American in her home church and says the feeling of “unity” among those at the Tekakwitha Conference is unmatched.

“I like to enjoy my own people,” she said. “A lot of the same people come (every year). You might not know their name, but they’re all familiar.”

Tekakwitha Conference Center

This is the first Tekakwitha Conference held in Louisiana, and it actually led to a move for the National Tekakwitha Conference Center.

Mitchell said Bishop Ronald Herzog of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Alexandria approached her about hosting the conference back in 2013, so she paid a visit to Alexandria. At that time, the headquarters were in Great Falls, Montana.

Central Louisiana left an impression on Mitchell, though, and she started searching for a building in the area.

“I just had a good feeling,” Mitchell said about her visit.

North Bolton Avenue in Alexandria has been home to the headquarters for almost two years now.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

The Tekakwitha Conference is named for Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, a Mohawk and Algonquin Indian, who lived in the 17th century.

Mitchell explained that the meaning of Tekaktwitha is to “put things in order,” which she finds fitting.

“It’s a Mohawk name for a woman, and this name was very appropriate,” Mitchell said. “Because she continues to bring her people together for a spiritual renewal, spiritual energy and to deepen our own relationship with our creator, God, and to further the process of enculturation.”

“That is the blending and enculturating our Catholic faith and also our native traditions. And so, this experience is one of embracing and affirming both our faith and our culture.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thetowntalk.com/story/news/local/2015/07/23/strong-bond-unites-catholic-native-americans/30588277/>

Native American Women - Carving a New Path of Hope

Posted: 07/24/2015 4:14 pm EDT Updated: 07/24/2015 4:59 pm EDT

[Donna Hakimian](#)

Representative, Gender Equality & the Advancement of Women for the Bahá'ís of the United States



Three years in D.C. have come and gone, and as I begin to embark on the next chapter of my life, there is one community and one calling that feels unfulfilled. You see, being a gender equality advocate in Washington D.C. is like nothing I have ever experienced. You are surrounded by strong voices for equality, a sometimes dizzying number of events to discuss and deliberate on, and a myriad of intersecting issues related to gender equality. Even with my strong foundation in women's studies, I am still shocked at the number of ways gender inequality can creep into almost every aspect of organized life. And there is the data to prove it. Whether it is AAUW's recent report, "[Solving The Equation: Women in Computer Science and Engineering](#)" or the recent launch of the "[State of the World's Fathers Report](#)" or several others, there is much work to be done and many thoughtful advocates undertaking it as we speak.

As this chapter of my life comes to a close, there is still a number that I cannot forget. [Statistically](#) more than one in [three](#) Native American women will be raped over the course of their lives. A community with so many complex layered forms of trauma heaped upon it still experiences sexual violence higher than the rest of the country. Yet,

the outcry that should be heard is absent at times. Now, that is not to say that there is not powerful and thoughtful work being done to advocate for the rights and safety of Native American communities. But in my attendance at hundreds of events, and in the countless hours of hearing experts speak, and seeing coalitions meet, the needs of this community still feel absent.

A time when the plight of Native American women was evident came during the most recent reauthorization of the [Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA). A key provision of that legislation provided tribal courts the authority to investigate and prosecute non-Native men who carry out abuse of Native women on tribal lands.

At the signing of the reauthorization of VAWA, an auditorium at the Department of the Interior was filled with Native women from every corner of the U.S. dressed in marvelous, colorful regalia. A spirit of relief seemed to have filled the room. While there was a long way to go, a very good step had been taken. I spoke after the event to the woman who introduced the Vice-President, and I stood humbled by her eloquence and courage in sharing her story of abuse and healing. In that space I felt welcome, seen and honored. I knew I needed to hear more of the stories carried by the attendees.

More than two years later, I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet LaDonna Harris again, founder of Americans for Indian Opportunity, at one of its events. I was invited by Pat Ruess, a longtime women's rights advocate and early champion of VAWA, who was to receive an award that night. I met individuals that, despite legacies of trauma, were carving a new path of hope. At the event, there was a raffle of crafts and goods from different areas around the U.S. One of them had chamomile tea from Alaska as a gift. While speaking to the woman who had won the package, I mentioned my love of chamomile tea -- a favorite with my grandfather. She then, without any hesitation, insisted I have it. I tried to fervently suggest she keep it. But to no avail. It was as though my keeping it was a greater gift for her. I've had similar experiences among Native communities across North America, whether at a potlach in Alert Bay, British Columbia or a Lakota sweat lodge in rural Georgia, I've seen a generosity unlike what society primes us to show. I don't intend to generalize an entire culture, and do realize the vast diversity and variety of virtues in each community, but this spirit of generosity, has been a beautiful constant in my experiences.

A longtime friend and mentor of mine, a woman with long sandalwood colored hair and warm brown eyes, used to tell me stories of how her parents met at a residential school in Montana. She recounted how her father, as a young boy, would tell her of long nights of crying in the school surrounded by other boys who were similarly stripped from their homes. And, perhaps, it was, in part, through hearing and understanding her family's past that a similar yet different memory of trauma that my family faced for being Bahá'ís in Iran was touched in me and will hopefully eventually be healed. Our stories, while miles apart, share so many of the same elements. They are evidence, in some sense, of our oneness.

Whether it is the statistic of 0.04% percent of the engineering workforce are Native American women , or the statistic of sexual violence faced by the Native American community cited above, this disheartening data seems bound by a silence reflective of the erasure of generations of history and culture that must be remembered, spoken of, and brought to light. And as the friend I describe above once told me, when I asked her how one knows what their destiny is, your destiny is bound together by what you choose to do, for that then becomes your destiny. So perhaps for us as a society, remembering, affirming and bearing witness to the trauma and possibility for healing for our Native American communities, and particularly the women and girls, is long overdue and not just possible, but inevitable.

Epilogue:

A moving short film that demonstrates living examples of resilience and healing in the Canadian First Nations community, and commissioned by the National Governing Body of the Bahá'ís of Canada, maybe found here:

<https://vimeo.com/131765992>

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/donna-hakimian/native-american-women-car_b_7866484.html

Keystone XL: Horse Riders From the Four Directions Join in Protest in Pierre, SD

[ICTMN Staff](#)

7/25/15

Indigenous voices may have been largely quelched in the hearing room, but they will be vociferous outside it when evidentiary proceedings begin on July 27 in South Dakota over TransCanada's application to route the Keystone XL pipeline through the state.

Though the pipeline would not directly cross reservation land, its proposed route runs through territory covered by treaty, say Native opponents of the \$7 billion, 1,700-mile-long project. It would carry up to 800,000 barrels of oil daily from the Alberta oil sands—and now, as it turns out, the Bakken oil fields—to refineries farther south in the U.S., as far away as the Gulf of Mexico in Texas.

On Sunday more than 60 Native and non-Native opponents of the pipeline will ride into Fort Pierre, South Dakota, on horseback from the four directions, “north, south, east and west, to show their collective resistance to the Keystone XL pipeline certification in South Dakota,” the [Indigenous Environmental Network](#) (IEN) announced on Friday July 24.

The group is hoping that the riders will be greeted by hundreds of people when they arrive at the intersection of highways 83 and 14, the starting point for a march across the Missouri River Bridge. The march will end at Steamboat Park in Pierre, with a water blessing and rally led by leaders of the pipeline opposition.

“Organized to show the solidarity in opposition to the South Dakota Public Utility Commission’s (SD PUC) certification of the Keystone XL pipeline permit, these actions are a culmination of years of collective resistance in South Dakota,” the IEN said.

The protests coincide with the July 27 start to the PUC’s weeklong evidentiary hearing on TransCanada’s permits for constructing the pipeline. On July 22 the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) finalized the rules on who could testify in the hearings that are designed to determine whether TransCanada’s original permit can be recertified or whether the company must resubmit it from scratch. South Dakota law mandates review of a project application if construction does not begin within four years of its approval, and TransCanada received approval in 2010. Numerous tribal and environmental witnesses who wanted to testify were turned down on the grounds that their testimony and objections did not directly pertain to the conditions in the permit. Opponents of the project argue that the plans have changed significantly enough to require a complete reapplication, rather than merely recertification of the original.

Even though many of the witnesses who would have voiced concerns over such things as climate change (which was ruled out as an issue, since it was not addressed in the original permit) and the source of the oil (TransCanada has added extra-flammable Bakken oil fields crude to the list of what would be transported) were closed out, they said it is important to continue publicizing the issues.

“The whole process is pretty atrocious at how the PUC has decided to bend to the will of TransCanada through this whole process,” said Dallas Goldtooth, who heads the IEN’s anti-Keystone XL campaign. “At the same time it’s not surprising. There have been numerous times we’ve seen public officials play to the wanton whims of the energy industry. We know that there’s a lot of pressure, we know that it’s an uphill battle.”

However, he said, the stakes are high, and not just for Indigenous Peoples.

“This isn’t good for the future of south Dakota, for our land, our water, our people,” Goldtooth told Indian Country Today Media Network. “And we’re just doing the best we can to encourage the commissioners to be wiser to what’s best for the future of South Dakota and for our community.”

“This project poses too much risk to the people, lands and water for it to be approved,” said Paul Draper, Dakota Rural Action board member, in the IEN statement. “I hope the commissioners listen with open hearts and minds to the concerns we will be putting forth.”

In addition, such fights are integral to the bigger picture, Goldtooth said.

“From an indigenous rights perspective it’s bigger than this one rights issue,” he said. “It’s part of our greater struggle to assert our rights as indigenous people.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/25/keystone-xl-horse-riders-four-directions-join-protest-pierre-sd-161186>

Sandra Bland and Now Rexdale Henry, Native American Dead in Jail

On July 10, 2015, both of them were still alive.

That was the day [Sandra Bland](#) was pulled over in Prairie View, Texas, for allegedly failing to use a turn signal. The officer, after writing her a ticket, asked that Bland put out her cigarette. Bland, within her rights, refused.

The conflict escalated. “I will light you up,” the officer said, threatening her with a Taser.

“You’re about to break my wrist.”

“You just slammed me.”

“You just knocked my head on the ground.”

Five-hundred miles away, in Philadelphia, Mississippi, 55-year-old Choctaw activist Rexdale Henry had just spent his first night in jail. He was arrested on July 9 for failure to pay a fine, the *Jackson Free Press* [reports](#).

Four days later, on July 13, Sandra Bland was allegedly found hanging from a noose made from a plastic bag.

The day after that, Rexdale Henry was found dead in his cell. His family is seeking a private autopsy and the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is looking into his death.

Like Bland, Henry was an activist for his community. He coached stickball and, according to the *Jackson Free Press*, was a candidate for the Choctaw Tribal Council.

And, like Bland, Henry’s timeline looks like this: Pulled over for a minor traffic infraction. Arrested and put in a cell. Found dead.

It may not be spoken of very often in the media, but [Native Americans are the racial group most likely to be killed by police](#).

As outrage continues to mount on social media in the wake of Sandra Bland's tragic death, Natives are left struggling with a question that has left them in turns hopeful and frustrated since the power of #BlackLivesMatter made itself known: How do we make ourselves heard?

The answer is the tireless efforts from Native American activists and steadily growing solidarity from Black Lives Matter activists, whose clout on social media is much needed considering the hindrances facing Natives living on reservations.

According to a 2014 Native Public Media and New America Foundation analysis, the broadband penetration rate across 566 federally recognized tribes is at [less than a paltry 10%](#).

In CNN Money's article, where the analysis appears, Native American students were reported as having to drive to neighboring cities just to sit in the McDonald's parking lot and connect to the Internet. It's students, of course, that provide the lifeblood to social movements.

And so it is up to us to amplify the voices of Native American activists who are struggling to be heard.

It is up to us to remember Rexdale Henry. To remember [Christina Tahhahwah](#). To remember [Paul Castaway](#).

We must remember them. We must speak on them. We must not let them fade into silence.

Awareness is only the first step on the path to justice. It's a step the black community and the Native American community are fighting tooth and nail to achieve.

But if the deaths of Sandra Bland and Rexdale Henry happening in such close succession prove anything, it's that systemic racism is snuffing out precious life in both communities – and that the path must be walked together.

Read more: <http://bluenationreview.com/native-american-activist-dead-in-jail-draws-sandra-bland-comparisons/#ixzz3h8ABf4dM>

Camp to focus on Native American culture, Gulf environment

Published: Monday, July 27, 2015 at 6:01 a.m.

Last Modified: Monday, July 27, 2015 at 12:05 a.m.

DULAC, La. (AP) — As the south Louisiana coast erodes into the Gulf of Mexico, local Native Americans living along the coastal bayous hope to pass on their heritage to their children through an annual three-day culture camp in Dulac from July 28 through July 31.

Kids between ages 6 to 18 will have the opportunity to learn about the Gulf environment, coastal erosion and land loss issues in a fun and interactive way, United Houma Nation camp coordinator Bette Billiot said. They will also partake in cultural activities including native dancing, drumming, regalia and bead-making and learn about healthy lifestyles and diet.

"Last year, we focused on culture. But this year, we're opening it up more to environmental issues in the bayou region," Billiot said. "We know the adults are interested, but the kids don't really understand it."

To illustrate land loss, kids will ride a boat to the Gulf where they will observe certain GPS points where land is supposed to be but are now under water, Billiot said. They will then learn about the impact of coastal erosion on traditional native industries including crabbing, shrimping and fishing, as well as the culture of bartering.

"Born and raised in Dulac, I grew up looking at these issues in one way," Billiot said. "Now I work with a lot of youth groups all over the Gulf Region. If we can get kids early, they have such ideas. So we want to make them aware of their surroundings and teach them how to slow down and prevent these issues."

For instance, Billiot said gardening used to be common throughout the bayou regions, but the encroaching salt water in the soil has discouraged plant growth. However, kids will learn more creative ways to grow despite the changing ground, she added.

A typical day will feature an educational component in the morning, a cultural component in the afternoon and a leisure component in the evening, Billiot said. Kids will first learn a particular native skill before teachers discuss its importance.

On the last day of camp, the children will travel to Lafitte to show off what they've learned in a mini-powwow with fellow campers at the United Houma Nation Camp2Bear.

"Most of the kids have never been to a powwow. This is kind of a 101 class for them," Billiot said. "Last year, they were kind of scared at the beginning because they've never seen regalia or dancing before, but we talked about the reasoning behind them. My goal is for all the kids to be open-minded and to accept these things and understand them."

Second-year campers Elijah and Anthony Billiot, 12-year-olds from Dulac, said they enjoyed native drumming the most last year because they "liked to make music and learn about it."

"I thought it was cool they were getting us together to do something during the summer to get our culture to survive," Elijah said. "The culture of Native Americans is a dying culture, and we need to do this to help it stay alive."

While this is the camp's second year, this is the first time it will be open to non-Native Americans, Billiot said. While visiting schools, she came upon children who were surprised at the fact that she owned a cellphone.

"They still have this perception that we live in teepees. But we're not in that era anymore," she added. "That's one of the reasons why we invite others to join and learn about our culture."

At least 10 more spots are available for registration. It costs \$40 for an 8-year-old or older, \$60 for two children in the same household and \$85 for three children in the same household. Costs will cover food, accommodations, field trips and basic supplies.

Direct Link: <http://www.houmatoday.com/article/20150727/APN/307279968>

Indigenous Diversities: Each Nation Is Different

[Duane Champagne](#)

7/26/15

Indigenous nations are extremely diverse in terms of languages, lands, governments, cultures, races, and nowadays even rural and urban residence. The diversity of Indigenous Peoples is a central heritage inherited from the time when all human peoples were diverse and tribal. The diversity of human cultures is an indication of the possible prospects and ways in which humans can live and prosper. Just as Indigenous Peoples continue to express diverse cultures and histories, that diversity is magnified by the contemporary world of nation states and national cultures, which usually are trying to transform and assimilate Indigenous Peoples into mainstream institutions, cultures, languages and government organizations.

The contemporary efforts of nationalization and assimilation are new sources of change and continued diversity for Indigenous Peoples. If indigenous nations maintain the right and capabilities to preserve their cultures, governments, and territories, the result will be extremely diverse ways in which Indigenous Peoples adapt to contemporary markets, governments, and land regimes.

Indigenous Peoples, no doubt, will continue to struggle to preserve their governments, lands, and cultures. Even under changing world conditions, left to their own devices, Indigenous Peoples will make specific and diverse accommodations to modernity and national institutions. The autonomy of Indigenous Peoples is not necessarily a rejection

of nation states and their national cultures, but rather a preference to uphold their political, land, and cultural ways, and carry them into the future.

The extreme diversity and specific autonomy of Indigenous Peoples does not mean that one cannot understand their goals, values, trends, interests, or perspectives. While Indigenous Peoples are extremely diverse in many ways, they have some common causes. Most indigenous groups share common understandings that they as a people have access to land, have a form of self-government, and want to preserve important parts of their culture and worldviews. In many ways, the international Indigenous Peoples movement over the past 50 years or more, reflects the common interests of preserving a variety of indigenous rights including land, self-government, and culture.

Indigeneity is not expressed as a common identity, culture, or government. There is no common indigenous identity, culture, or government. Indigenous Peoples want to express their own specific cultures and identities. There is no common indigenous identity, there are a large number of indigenous identities. The common cause that unites contemporary Indigenous Peoples at the international level is the result of similar threats from nation states that do not fully recognize indigenous claims to land, self-government, culture, and other indigenous rights. There is a common threat, but each indigenous nation defends specific cultures, lands, history, and forms of self-government, that are autonomous to the full range of other Indigenous Peoples. There is not one common indigenous government, but rather the struggle to uphold many diverse indigenous nations.

How can we understand or even speak about Indigenous Peoples and uphold and respect their diversity and autonomy? Understanding and developing relations with Indigenous Peoples comes from listening and respecting what Indigenous Peoples say about themselves, about what they say about who they are, and what they want. It means taking seriously their claims to specific cultures, identities, self-government, interests, and values. Such understanding can take place through deep appreciation of specific indigenous histories, cultures, worldviews, and their contemporary expressions of adapting to contemporary government, law, cultures, and communities.

This complexity should not be shirked as too specialized or impossible, but rather as an appreciation of the continued cultural and political diversity of the human experience. Indigenous nations are best understood from their own perspective. The great diversity of change and tradition that is the contemporary experience of indigenous nations should indicate that common ground is not necessarily easy or forthcoming. However, an indigenous pathway to balanced and reciprocal relations is through mutual respect for the cultural differences of each human nation, nowadays including modernizing nation states.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/26/indigenous-diversities-each-nation-different-161036>

***Foxtales* Shows Game Devs How to Get a Sensitive Story Right**



[Charley Locke](#) Entertainment

Date of Publication: 07.28.15. 07.28.15

Time of Publication: 10:00 am. 10:00 am

Every game has a moment—a moment that not only crystallizes your mission, but that lets you know why you’re playing at all. In *Foxtales*, that moment happens almost immediately. Nuna, a young Inuit girl, and her Arctic fox are overjoyed when the spring thaw begins in her village; but when that enthusiasm leads them to act thoughtlessly, it sets off a chain of events that endanger their lives. It’s a mistake, says Ishmael Hope, borne of exuberance without consideration.

“It’s an amazing feeling to see the light after so many months in the darkness—instead of an endless blizzard, you have the light and vitality of the tundra coming alive in springtime,” says Hope, the game’s writer. But that relief isn’t without responsibility: “If you forget to respect the world around you, there will be consequences.”

Released today for Xbox One, PS4, and Steam, *Foxtales* builds on the world of last year’s [Never Alone](#), which first introduced players to Nuna, Fox, and the tundra above the Arctic Circle. Hope’s moral, however, doesn’t just inform the game’s plot; it also holds true for game developers looking to portray native culture—an effort that too often results in overused stereotypes. “Usually, we just hope the games aren’t horribly offensive,” says Hope, a member of Alaska’s Iñupiat tribe.

And so *Foxtales*, like *Never Alone*, presents native culture far beyond igloos and powwows—in large part because Iñupiat elders provided feedback on the game throughout the development process. But those elders weren’t a mere focus group; as part

of the first indigenous-owned videogame company in the US, they were executives overseeing the process itself.

Both *Foxtales* and *Never Alone* were developed by Upper One Games, a collaboration between the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (C.I.T.C.), a nonprofit serving natives in Alaska, and game developer E-Line Media.

“We wanted to make a financial investment that would also make a social impact,” explains Gloria O’Neill, president and CEO of the C.I.T.C. and executive chair of Upper One Games. The C.I.T.C. wanted to share Iñupiat values with its young people in a format they found accessible, and to offer an alternative to how the media often stereotypes native culture. “I saw an opportunity to be part of telling our own stories and to have a voice in the development process,” says O’Neill. “This was a way to create an authentic game that Iñupiat are proud of.”

To make an authentic game, Upper One Games embarked on what O’Neill describes as “inclusive development,” guided by hundreds of hours of ongoing feedback from the local Iñupiat community in far northern Alaska. As a game writer with an Iñupiat and Tlingit background, Hope played a central role.

Especially with the native community, often misrepresented in popular culture, establishing a sense of trust took time—and 13 separate trips north of the Arctic Circle.

“This kind of cultural collaboration is unprecedented,” says Sean Vesce, creative director at E-Line Media. “The way our industry portrays indigenous culture is pretty shameful—there’s a lot of stereotypes, a lot of cultural appropriation without much thought for how these people and their beliefs are being represented.”

For Vesce and his fellow developers, the collaboration of Upper One Games offers a way to break out of the game development world. “Gaming can be very insular, very self-referential,” explains Vesce, who previously worked on *Tomb Raider* and *Interstate ’76*. Instead of studio execs at Microsoft or Activision, Vesce’s team pitched demos to native elders around a dining room table.

And the elders spoke their minds. As Vesce explains, when he introduced the concept of dimension switching from the real world to the spirit world, one elder informed him, “Our spirituality isn’t on demand. You can’t just hit a button and suddenly hey, you’re surrounded by helpful spirits.”

A Family Affair

The story in *Foxtales* is based on “The Two Coastal Brothers,” an Iñupiat tale told by Willie Panik Goodwin Sr., Hope’s grandfather; in fact, the game is narrated by Goodwin’s son (Hope’s uncle). “The stories of the elders shape the narrative arc of the game,” Hope says. “Having them work on it brings it to the next stage of genuinely being from their world.”

While *Never Alone* was loosely based another Iñupiat tale, “Kunuksaayuka,” sourcing *Foxtales* from Hope’s own family brought in a new level of community involvement. The creative team from Upper One Games all flew up to Kotzebue, Alaska, where they spent five days sharing a template of the game and getting feedback from Hope’s uncles. “There’s often a denial of the creative and intellectual agency of non-Western people,” Hope says. “We’ve proved that when we’re equal collaborators all the way through the process, that’s the way to make a better, more authentic game.”

In fact, Hope’s uncles and other Iñupiat elders contribute to the game experience throughout *Foxtales*. They’re featured in five minute-long video documentaries interspersed throughout gameplay, sharing their own memories and providing background on Iñupiat culture, including one uncle’s story of getting trapped while hunting out on the ice.

The game’s central message of respecting the natural world applies to all players, but Hope envisions *Foxtales* as offering something more to native kids. “When I was coming of age in the ’80s and ’90s, there was so much suppression of being native,” says Hope. “Now young people can see interest from outside, and get a sense of self-worth from their culture.”

He hopes the games, and particularly the embedded documentaries told by elders, will lead young people to pursue an interest in their own histories. “There’s a potential for technology to lead to antisocial patterns, but this has the chance to subvert that,” he explains. “Native kids will want to talk to their families after playing the games, and hear about their own stories.”

There have been other attempts at culturally informed games, like *Spirits of Spring*, but not with the same intensive development process. Elizabeth LaPensée, a native game developer who spoke at the first Natives in Game Dev Gathering in May 2015, sees Upper One’s work as crucial. “*Never Alone* set the standard for how to merge native storytelling with game development,” she says.

And while *Foxtales* might be the final experience in the world that *Never Alone* built, Upper One plans to partner with other native communities worldwide to develop games based on their stories. “We believe there’s a place for that variety of storytelling in the younger medium of videogames,” says Alan Gershenfeld, co-founder and president of E-Line Media. “These are stories that transcend culture and communicate a perspective, executed at a high end of the craft.”

Direct Link: <http://www.wired.com/2015/07/foxtales-game-process/>

A Native American Activist Died in Police Custody and Nobody Is Talking About It

By [Zak Cheney-Rice](#) July 27, 2015

It's been almost two weeks since Rexdale Henry died in a Mississippi jail. Today, the civil rights activist and Choctaw tribe member's family is still looking for answers.

On July 14 at 10 a.m., authorities at the Neshoba County Jail in Philadelphia, Mississippi, allegedly found Henry dead in his cell. They claimed to have seen him alive for the last time just [half an hour earlier](#), at 9:30. The 53-year-old's family [told](#) *Fusion* that two of Henry's ribs had been broken, though his official cause of death remains unclear. The *Jackson Free Press* [reports](#) that his body has been "flown to Florida for an independent autopsy paid for by anonymous donors."

He'd apparently been arrested for failing to pay an old fine.

This summer, we have witnessed numerous deaths of people in police custody, some prompting suspicion of foul play and law enforcement complicity. [Sandra Bland](#), 28, in Waller County Texas, and [Kindra Chapman](#), 18 in Homewood, Alabama, were both found dead of alleged suicide in their respective jail cells earlier this month, drawing [widespread attention](#) to police maltreatment of black women and girls.

But Henry's case conjures another overlooked disparity: Police violence against Native Americans. *Mic* [reported](#) previously that indigenous people in the United States have been killed by police at nearly identical rates as black Americans since 1999. Yet anti-indigenous state violence — much like anti-black state violence, until very recently — remains a topic many are loath to seriously address.

This violence does not always take the form of a gun to the head, either. From a very young age, Native peoples face some of the starkest health and quality of life disparities of any group in the country, from high [poverty](#), high school [dropout](#) and [substance abuse](#) rates to some of the most staggering youth [suicide](#) figures in the country. Cumulatively, these gaps all stem from a long and ongoing history of government sanctioned murder, land theft, forced relocation and racial abuse.

Rexdale Henry's death also assumes extra significance considering the history of Neshoba County, where he died. In [1964](#), James Chaney, a black Mississippian civil rights activist, and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, two white New York civil rights activists, were found murdered and discarded in an "earthen dam" near Philadelphia after a Neshoba County sheriff's deputy arrested and released them, chased them down and then turned them over to the local Ku Klux Klan chapter. The incident went down as one of the defining chapters of Freedom Summer.

The day before Henry was arrested, 39-year-old Jonathan Sanders, a black man, also [died](#) after being choked for 20 minutes by a police officer in nearby Clarke County. The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is looking into both his and Henry's deaths.

"At a time when the nation is focused on the terrible circumstances of the brutal death of Sandra Bland, it is critical to expose the many ways in which Black Americans, Native Americans and other minorities are being arrested for minor charges and end up dead in jail cells," Syracuse University professor Janis McDonald, who is helping Henry's family through the inquiry, said in a statement, according to the *Jackson Free Press*.

h/t [News One](#)

Correction: July 28, 2015

An earlier version of this article stated that Kindra Chapman was found dead in Homewood County, Alabama. She was found dead in the city of Homewood.

Direct Link: <http://mic.com/articles/122990/native-american-activist-rexdale-henry-died-in-police-custody>

Native American group calls for schools to abandon Redskins nicknames

Howard Monroe Published: July 28, 2015, 6:37 pm Updated: July 28, 2015, 11:19 pm

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) — The Goshen Redskins hope to have a new nickname by January 1.

But Goshen isn't the only school in the state that still uses that as its nickname.

Emmerich Manual High School on Indianapolis' south side also uses the name.

Both of those schools say there are no plans to change the name, but one group is hoping they reconsider.

"I don't believe people in the general population realize how hurtful that word really is," said Doug Poe, the Executive Director and CEO of the American Indian Center of Indiana, Inc.

Poe gives talks around the state on the word "redskin."

It's a term he says most won't even use.

"It's a big issue within the Native community. We don't even use the full name, we just use the 'R' word," said Poe.

Poe applauds Goshen's decision to get rid of the nickname. He says the term shouldn't be glorified

“The term redskin actually became popular after the bounties were put on Native Americans. They were paid by England for the scalps and the hands and when they got over to Europe the skin had turned red because of the blood, and that’s where the term redskin came from. It came from those bounties. The connotations and suffering and bloodshed, all the mishaps to the Native Americans throughout history, just lead to historical trauma and it just continues on with hearing that word and using that word,” said Poe.

“I think it would be good to change it for the sake of people’s feelings,” said Jessica Rodriguez, an incoming sophomore at Emmerich Manual.

The charter school is run by IPS. A spokeswoman for IPS said today they’ve had no issues with the name, and said there were no plans to change it.

But Rodriguez says it’s been a topic of discussion.

“We actually did an article on it, about changing it, but nobody really said anything about actually changing it,” said Rodriguez.

“There’s no way it can be used and not be hurtful,” said Poe.

Poe says he doesn’t only have an issue with the term redskin, he says no nicknames pertaining to Native American culture should be used in naming mascots.

Direct Link: <http://wishtv.com/2015/07/28/native-american-group-calls-for-schools-to-abandon-redskins-nicknames/>

What Happened To Rexdale Henry, A Native American Activist? His Death Is Drawing Comparisons To Sandra Bland

[Kim Lyons](#)
[@skimblely](#)
3 days ago [News](#)



In a case that some are comparing to the recent death of Sandra Bland, the family of [Rexdale Henry, a Native American who died in custody](#) in the Neshoba County, Mississippi, jail is seeking an independent autopsy, according to WTOK. Henry, who was in jail for failing to pay a fine, was last seen by officers on July 14 about a half-hour before his body was found. The [Mississippi crime lab conducted an autopsy](#), and the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is now involved in the case, according to the *Jackson Free Press*. A few days after the July 19 funeral services for Henry, his body was flown to Florida for the independent autopsy.

Henry was arrested on July 9. His family is questioning what happened to their loved one, who they described as healthy, but no details of the autopsy or the cause of death have been released so far, the *Jackson Free Press* reported.

In an eerie coincidence, Henry was arrested just one day before Sandra Bland was taken into police custody in Waller County, Texas, after a now-infamous traffic stop. She was found dead in her cell three days later, and the Harris County [medical examiner ruled her death was a suicide](#). Bland's family has questioned that finding, saying she was about to start a new job and showed no indication of being depressed or suicidal. The circumstances of Bland's arrest by Trooper Brian Encinia have drawn widespread criticism and outrage.

Henry, 53, was part of the Choctaw tribe and had been active in his community, coaching stickball and running for tribal council in Bogue Chitto. Several social media users have drawn comparisons of Henry and Bland, noting that both were activists, members of minority groups, and in jail for minor infractions.

This is not the first time the Neshoba County Jail has had a prisoner death in one of its cells. Last November, [Michael McDougle, 29, was found dead in his cell](#) a day after being arrested, according to the *Hattiesburg American*. McDougle was found to have drugs in his system, but the cause of death remained unclear.

According to the *Free Press*, civil-rights activists John Steele and Diane Nash, and Syracuse University law professors Janis McDonald and Paula Johnson of the school's Cold Case Justice Initiative are assisting the Henry family with their independent probe into the death of their loved one.

"At a time when the nation is focused on the terrible circumstances of the brutal death of Sandra Bland, it is critical to expose the many ways in which black Americans, Native Americans and other minorities are being arrested for minor charges and end up dead in jail cells," McDonald said in a statement.

Direct Link: <http://www.bustle.com/articles/99920-what-happened-to-rexdale-henry-a-native-american-activist-his-death-is-drawing-comparisons-to-sandra>

Police Shoot and Kill Mentally Ill Native American Man

Wednesday, 29 July 2015 00:00 By [s.e. smith](#) | Report

On July 12 of this year, Denver police [shot and killed Paul Castaway](#), a mentally ill Lakota Sioux man. His case raises awareness of two issues that are flying under the radar in the ongoing national conversation about police shootings: Over half of fatal shootings [involve mentally ill people](#), and [Native Americans are statistically more at risk](#) of dying in police shootings than other racial groups. Castaway's traumatic and horrific death is riveting his Denver community, and his last words are a haunting indictment of law enforcement in the United States: "What's wrong with you guys?"

According to family members and witnesses, Castaway's mother Lynn Eagle Feather called the police for help when her son started waving a large knife while he was intoxicated. This is often the first step in fatal incidents involving police officers and mentally ill people - frequently people are off their medications or experiencing breakthrough episodes of breaks with reality and other mental health problems. They may not be fully aware of what they're doing and they pose a greater risk to themselves than others, but family members aren't equipped to provide the help they need. Since few communities have a mental health crisis response unit, families resort to calling police in the hopes that officers can subdue their family members and help them get to treatment.

As is commonly the case, that didn't happen for Castaway. When officers responded, the terrified man ran into a mobile home park around the street, where officers cornered him. Witnesses and family who had access to surveillance tapes claim that he was holding the knife to his neck, while police claim that he was posing a threat to officers, so he was shot four times, later dying at the hospital. Chillingly, witnesses report that he was forced onto his stomach and cuffed after being shot, despite his severe injuries. The much-loved member of the community left behind a son as well as other family members.

Advocates have risen in protest against the shooting - [over 100 people rallied in downtown Denver](#) to raise awareness of the shooting and ask for justice. His family is demanding full copies of video related to the shooting, and families of some of the witnesses are [asking for counseling as well](#). Many of those who saw the shooting were children at play who were traumatized by the sight of law enforcement chasing and shooting a man right in front of them, especially when it was followed by brutal handling on the ground as he was put into cuffs. Members of the Colorado Chapter of the American Indian Movement, meanwhile, have rallied in front of the Denver Police Department to ask for answers.

Even when alerted to the fact that a subject is mentally ill - as happened in this case - police officers often respond poorly, illustrating the need for better protocols and training in addition to the long-term development of mental health crisis units. Cuts to mental health support services in the United States have left police forces on the front lines of providing support to the mentally ill community, and sometimes this involves paying a high price. Notably, Native Americans experience mental illnesses at a [higher rate than the general population](#), putting them at greater risk of police interventions gone wrong.

Even without mental illness as a compounding factor, Native Americans frequently die at the hands of U.S. police. Though they account for .8 percent of the population, [1.9 percent of police shootings involve Native Americans](#). The black community makes up 13 percent of the population and 25 percent of police shootings - a truly shocking statistic - but in terms of death per million people annually, Native Americans rank perturbingly high on the list. While black people between 20 and 24 die at a rate of 7.1 per million, Native Americans between 25 and 34 follow close behind at 6.6, and 35-44 year old Native Americans are the next largest category of those who die in fatal shootings. The horrible statistics on police encounters for the Native community need to be addressed as part of a larger push for reforms in American policing, but the movement to talk about Native deaths hasn't yet expanded nationally. Maybe Castaway's encounter will act as the tipping point, rather than slipping below the surface of his small community.

Direct Link: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32120-police-shoot-and-kill-mentally-ill-native-american-man>

Video games teach Colombian children about indigenous cultures

Published July 29, 2015

[EFE](#)

By Daniel Suarez Zarta.

Four video games illustrated with landscapes, clothing, music and other features of indigenous cultures will allow children to discover the traditions of Colombia's native communities.

The Indigenous Ancestral Wisdom, or SAI, project, employing video games and cards, is led by the Sura Group and was developed by Colombia Games, targeting children of elementary-school age.

SAI director Cecilia Duque told EFE the video games were designed to help children learn about some of these ethnic groups so they can develop a sense of belonging and identity.

"There are almost 86 ethnic groups in Colombia, each with a different language. There are nearly 90 indigenous dialects and in the formal educational system people do not receive information" about them, Duque said.

Children will get to learn about the Embera, Guambiana, Huitoto, Kogui, Kuna, Kurripako, Sukuani and Wayuu ethnic groups, which were selected after researchers working on the project divided the country into eight cultural ecosystems.

"First, different cultures with similar spaces and behaviors were selected, and then the most representative indigenous communities in each ecosystem were chosen," Duque said.

The initiative started about 18 months ago, when 10 professionals started the research phase, and work continued on two stages: app creation and production of learning cards.

Duque said project developers decided to use video games since that is the language children use today.

With these tools, children are set to build puzzles that, once completed, reveal which ethnic group the character belongs to and search for items, such as the spindles used by Kogui Indians to hand-spin cotton, or the Kunas' "karpa" employed to transport food.

The video games also depict Indians' landscapes and stories.

Juan Nantes, president of Colombia Games, said his company immediately joined the project.

"Our whole team was enthusiastic and joined the story, and beyond producing a game we identified with the cause," Nantes said.

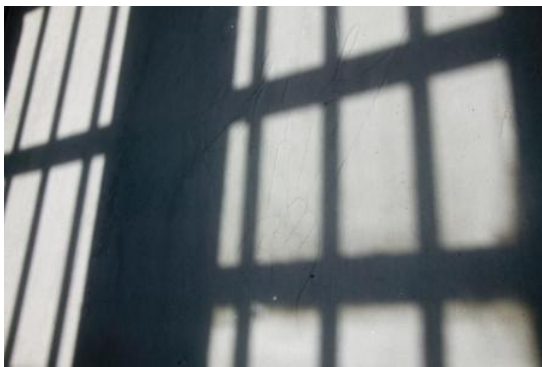
Colombia Games has been in the market 10 years and its portfolio includes more than 120 apps.

The creators and directors of the SAI hope to contribute to the preservation of native culture by getting "thousands and thousands" of downloads. EFE

Direct Link: <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/entertainment/2015/07/29/video-games-teach-colombian-children-about-indigenous-cultures/>

Jailed Native American woman died after police told her to 'quit faking' pain symptoms

10:13 a.m. ET



Earlier this month, 24-year-old Sarah Lee Circle Bear was found unconscious in a jail cell in Aberdeen, South Dakota, where she was being held for a bond violation. She died in her cell soon after the incident, and her family is reportedly considering legal recourse.

Witnesses allege that Circle Bear, a mother of an infant and a toddler, was being transferred to a holding cell when she began crying out in pain, asking for medical attention. The jail staff reportedly told her to "quit faking" and "knock it off" before dragging her body into the cell where she would later be found unresponsive.

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that Native Americans are disproportionately the victims of police killings, while a 2015 report from the Lakota People's Law Project details other justice system disparities Native Americans suffer. Bonnie Kristian

Direct Link: <http://theweek.com/speedreads/569138/jailed-native-american-woman-died-after-police-told-quit-faking-pain-symptoms>

Fulfilling a promise to her Native American grandma

Posted: Jul 30, 2015 11:25 AM MST Updated: Jul 30, 2015 11:25 AM MST
By Allie Torgan CNN

CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX RESERVATION, South Dakota (CNN) -- In an isolated area of South Dakota -- a three-hour drive from the nearest large city -- some 6,000 Native Americans struggle to survive on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

They are members of the Lakota tribe. Poverty runs rampant on the reservation. So does unemployment, alcoholism and diabetes. Suicide rates are also high.

Rochelle Ripley is working to change that.

Growing up, Ripley spent her summers listening to her grandmother's stories.

Her grandmother, a full-blooded Lakota, taught her about their culture and the struggles faced by the people.

"She taught us to be very proud of who we were. Our people have survived through all of the challenges that have come over the generations," Ripley said.

Before her grandmother died, she asked Ripley to do one thing: Go home and help their people.

Today, Ripley is fulfilling that promise.

"The spirit of the people, it's alive. But they struggle with the conditions tremendously," Ripley said.

Through her nonprofit, hawkwing, she has delivered an estimated \$9 million in services and goods to the Lakota people.

Ripley and her group help them find jobs and live in safe homes and provide them with healthy food.

Four to five times a year, Ripley makes the trip from her home in Connecticut to the Cheyenne River Reservation. Working alongside the tribe, she and volunteers run a food bank and provide free health services, home renovations and educational opportunities.

For Ripley, the main goal is honoring the Native American people with dignity.

"My grandma gave me the gift of being put on this path," said Ripley, who is half-Lakota. "To be able to both honor her and to honor our people here, that's the reason for life."

CNN spoke to Ripley about her efforts on the reservation. Below is an edited version of the conversation.

CNN: You have been steadily providing help to the reservation for 16 years. How do you begin to address the myriad issues there?

Rochelle Ripley: I describe what hawkwing does as a table and that there's four legs to the table: housing, health, employment and education/job skills. And the tabletop is jobs. Until those four legs are secured and solid, we can't put the top on.

We started by providing a holiday gift box to every child on the reservation, about 2,600. They all get new clothes, toys, books, personal care products and school supplies. It was to form and build relationships. We continue that to this day.

About seven years ago, we added a variety of direct service projects like medical and dental clinics, construction work and youth activities. Through hawkwing's efforts, we've provided between 100,000 and 125,000 pounds of food, and we get in everything from beds to washers and dryers."

CNN: Health issues are a big challenge on the reservation. How do you help?

Ripley: We really do work collaboratively with the tribe everywhere we go. We have naturopathic doctors who give out supplements and vitamins and lots of information on how to eat healthy, how to take care of your diabetes. We have a respiratory therapist meet with families that have challenges around asthma, which is also a big issue because of black mold out here. We have an acupuncturist doing acupuncture for stress management.

One of the reasons that we bring a lot of naturopathic people out as part of our medical team is because it really is paralleled to the type of medicine that our ancestors practiced. The medicines are still here all over the reservation. So many of our elders, especially, really appreciate getting that type of education and opportunity. They love getting the natural teas as part of their healing. They love working with any of the alternative ways as well as using traditional Western medicine.

CNN: You've turned personal tragedy into something that benefits an entire community.

Ripley: When I was child, I was a victim of a violent crime. And during that time, I stopped speaking. When I went to see my grandma, she did a healing ceremony on me, and we spent the day together. She talked about our culture. That's when she said to me that I was born into two worlds, because my other side is New York Jewish. And she asked me if I would promise to go home and help our people when I grew up.

CNN: You made that promise, but it wasn't until 45 years later that you acted on it. What triggered you?

Ripley: When my daughter came to me to tell me I was to be a grandmother for the first time, that memory came back, and I knew it was time for me to do the work that needed to be done.

In my mind, things had to have improved to some degree because it was 45 years later. I just was shocked that it was worse than I could imagine. So that was just that motivation that really spurred me on to create hawkwing. It really was the inspiration to say I understood what my grandmother meant and it was time to get moving and change things. And I decided to take my human services skills that I had built as a lifetime career and form a nonprofit to begin the process of coming home and helping.

We're all children of this earth, and we need to work together so that everyone has a chance at having a decent life.

Want to get involved? Check out the hawkwing website at www.hawkwing.org and see how to help.

Direct Link: <http://www.nbc-2.com/story/29671402/fulfilling-a-promise-to-her-native-american-grandma>

A Kentucky 5K race involved 'Native American reenactors' chasing runners

by [Casey Tolan](#) | [July 30, 2015](#) 12:12 PM
Updated

July 30, 2015 1:03 PM

Organizers of a 5K race in Kentucky who planned to enlist "Native American reenactors" to chase participants announced Thursday they would be changing the race.

According to [the Central Kentucky News](#), runners in the James Ray 5K race in Harrodsburg, Ky. were chased by Native American reenactors near the finish line of last year's race. The same event was being planned for this year's race, which is being held on Aug. 15.

Terry Wasson, the race's organizer, told the *News* that the reenactors were involved in order to make the race "unique." "It seemed to be something that everybody really enjoyed last year," Wasson told the paper. "It was a big hit and came off as unique as we had hoped it would."

The race is scheduled to be held as part of Pioneer Days, an event held by the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce to commemorate Kentucky's frontier days. James Ray, a [former general](#) who fought Native Americans in the late 1700s and early 1800s, later served in the Kentucky legislature.

But after several outraged posts on the chamber of commerce's [Facebook page](#), the chamber said it "has pulled all references to Native Americans in its print and internet media" in a [Facebook posting](#) this morning. The chamber "does not endorse the misrepresentation of Native Americans," it said. A chamber employee referred Fusion to the Facebook post and hung up the phone.

Several people posted a photo on the chamber's Facebook page that appears to be of a Native American reenactor in last year's race. (All race numbers in last year's race were in the 400's, and the numbers 428 and 429 were given to female racers, according to [the results from last year's race](#). The background of the photo also matches [a Google Street View](#) near the race's finish line point in Harrodsburg.)



Wasson did not respond to several requests for comment.

Direct Link: <http://fusion.net/story/175447/5k-chased-by-native-americans/>

Former Chippewa Cree leader sentenced to 5½ years in prison

The Associated Press 4:22 p.m. MDT July 29, 2015

HELEN (AP) – A judge sentenced a former Chippewa Cree tribal council member Wednesday to 5 ½ years in prison after he pleaded guilty to embezzlement, tax evasion and other charges in a federal corruption investigation.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris also ordered John “Chance” Houle to pay restitution of \$121,219 for the tax evasion charge, in addition to a total of \$525,237 split between him and three co-defendants.

Houle pleaded guilty to three felony charges in December in an agreement with federal prosecutors that dropped additional charges.

Prosecutors said Houle took bribes and kickbacks from contractors while he was on the Chippewa Cree Business Committee, then tried to conceal the payments by having them made to his children and the Flying Rock Cattle Co.

Houle received \$306,987 between 2009 and 2011 in exchange for contracts he awarded to Hunter Burns Construction Co., which was partly owned by James Eastlick Jr., a former psychologist at the reservation’s health clinic, prosecutors said.

Eastlick pleaded guilty in April to aiding and abetting theft from an Indian tribal government receiving federal funding.

Houle also was accused of embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars from a bank account for the Chippewa Cree Rodeo Association. Houle and another tribal member, Wade Colliflower, disguised the payments to look like legitimate rodeo expenses, prosecutors said, and he received cash and money to buy a vehicle for his daughter.

Colliflower pleaded guilty to related charges and was sentenced in May to six months in prison and six months home confinement.

The case came from a wide-ranging federal investigation into the misuse of U.S. government money on Montana Indian reservations.

Direct Link: <http://www.greatfalls Tribune.com/story/news/local/2015/07/29/former-chippewa-cree-leader-sentenced-years-prison/30853635/>

Incomprehensible: Indigenous Immigrants Screwed Because of Bad Translations

[Rick Kearns](#)

7/30/15

Many Indigenous immigrants from Mexico and Central America, including unaccompanied children, are not able to understand their rights or present their case for asylum to United States officials due to a lack of appropriate language assessment, leading to no translation, which is in violation of an Executive Order and their rights to due process according to advocates in Arizona.

In late May and June, indigenous rights advocates from Tucson, Arizona issued declarations and an in-depth study of the problems facing indigenous immigrants who enter into the U.S. Immigration system.

Every year several thousand indigenous immigrants find themselves lost in a bewildering and sometimes abusive system that breaks up families, destroys lives and sends people back to their home countries where they often face more violence according to the advocates.

In the first event, held on May 26, the Guatemalan Indigenous Community in Tucson (GICT) published the “Declaration of Indigenous Language Speaking Immigrants in the US Immigration System” to explain the problems facing their communities and to issue a call for action from the relevant federal agencies.

“We call on all U.S. government immigration agencies, the ancillary private contractors legally empowered and financed by the U.S. Federal government, as well as our own counsels to immediately recognize our right to communicate in our own languages and to stop denying us our legal and human rights under due process and international law. We call on all policy makers within the U.S. migration system, in related criminal and child dependency courts to secure the necessary resources to provide for interpretation for indigenous languages from Central America and Mexico,” the Declaration stated.

The need for the declaration and advocacy came to the attention of Guatemalan activists in Tucson including Walter Gonzalo, spokesman for the GICT and one of the contributors to the Declaration. Gonzalo is Quiche, a Mayan people, from Guatemala and speaks Quiche, Spanish and English.

He explained that the GICT was officially formed in 2014. Before that members of the GICT had been working informally before last year in helping indigenous and other immigrants who were in the local shelter or who had been ordered to leave Tucson after interacting with immigration and border patrol officials. The group often raised money for food, transportation and clothing for the immigrants and along the way he noticed that many people were unaware of their situation.

“I encountered many indigenous immigrants who did not know what was happening to them,” he stated. “They didn’t speak Spanish, or knew very little, and had signed papers without knowing what they meant.”

One of the volunteers who helps the GICT is Blake Gentry, a policy analyst with AMA Consulting and an activist in Tucson. Gentry went on to conduct a study of the situation

facing the indigenous immigrants and held a press conference on June 20 to describe some of the findings in [“The Exclusion of Indigenous Language Speaking Immigrants in the United States Immigration System, a technical review.”](#)

For the study, Gentry interviewed immigrants, immigrant attorneys, court interpreters, and workers in family detention centers and in shelters for unaccompanied children.

“I found a deeply and profoundly disturbing pattern,” Gentry said at the June 20 press event in Tucson.

“A pattern of comprehensive exclusion of indigenous languages in immigration processes and legal proceedings; exceptions demonstrated a highly inconsistent use of phone interpreters for immigrants whose first language is an indigenous language. The research findings suggest that many indigenous language-speaking immigrants are not literate in Spanish and have a low level of oral comprehension in Spanish. They are racially most often misidentified as Hispanics, and not indigenous persons; that misidentification leads to mistaken assumptions about their capacity to speak and understand Spanish. Such assumptions are made in every level or phase of the U.S. immigration system: during apprehension, in long term and family detention, in immigration and criminal court, and in shelters for unaccompanied children. Even when individuals were identified as indigenous language speakers there was no meaningful monitoring of access to interpretation,” he asserted.

In the study they found that the lack of information in indigenous languages could be seen in over 30 different points of contact between immigrants and U.S. officials and that many indigenous immigrants were affected. They estimated that of the Guatemalans removed from the area in 2014, between 18,819 and 22,858 were indigenous language speakers, not counting those remaining in detention. The total number of unaccompanied indigenous children in that year was approximately 7,000.

According to Gentry and the GICT, this lack of services violates Executive Order 13166 which guarantees language rights access to all persons, and that denial of such access also violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

In press statements issued after the June 20 event, both Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol officials asserted that they had always found translators and ways to communicate with immigrants. They also said that the translator services they employ can handle 150 languages and dialects, and that they contact consulate officers to assist in the process.

Another agency involved with the language issue is the Department of Human Services (DHS) and they also pointed to their “I speak” project which is translated into 56 languages. Gentry countered that this approach is not working either.

“That is a non-starter for indigenous language speakers with low levels of literacy and few who can read their own written language which were only introduced in the rural public school system in Guatemala in the early 2000s,” Gentry said.

In the meantime, the GICT will be presenting their declaration directly to the local Customs and Border Patrol office. Both the GICT and Gentry stated they would be happy to help develop an adequate language assessment process.

In their Declaration, the GICT further explained why more indigenous Guatemalans will be traveling north.

“Our indigenous cultures survived colonization, the building of post-colonial nation states, and civil wars in Central America and Mexico. As Indigenous Peoples living now in the second decade of the 21st Century, we must act to protect our families and our cultures against the changing threats of visible enemies that strike at us with a variety of weapons. We make this call given the on-going displacement of Indigenous Peoples from principally but not exclusively rural areas in Mexico and Central America. The weapons being used against our families are the economic and security policies that result in our communities being transformed into unlivable places due to on-going economic displacement that forces us into poverty and extreme poverty, exposes us to dangerous Drug Cartel violence, or both.”

“We state here unequivocally, that unless national governments dismantle those weapons which destroy our communities and separate our families – we have no choice but to migrate.”

Read more at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/30/incomprehensible-indigenous-immigrants-screwed-because-bad-translations-161223>